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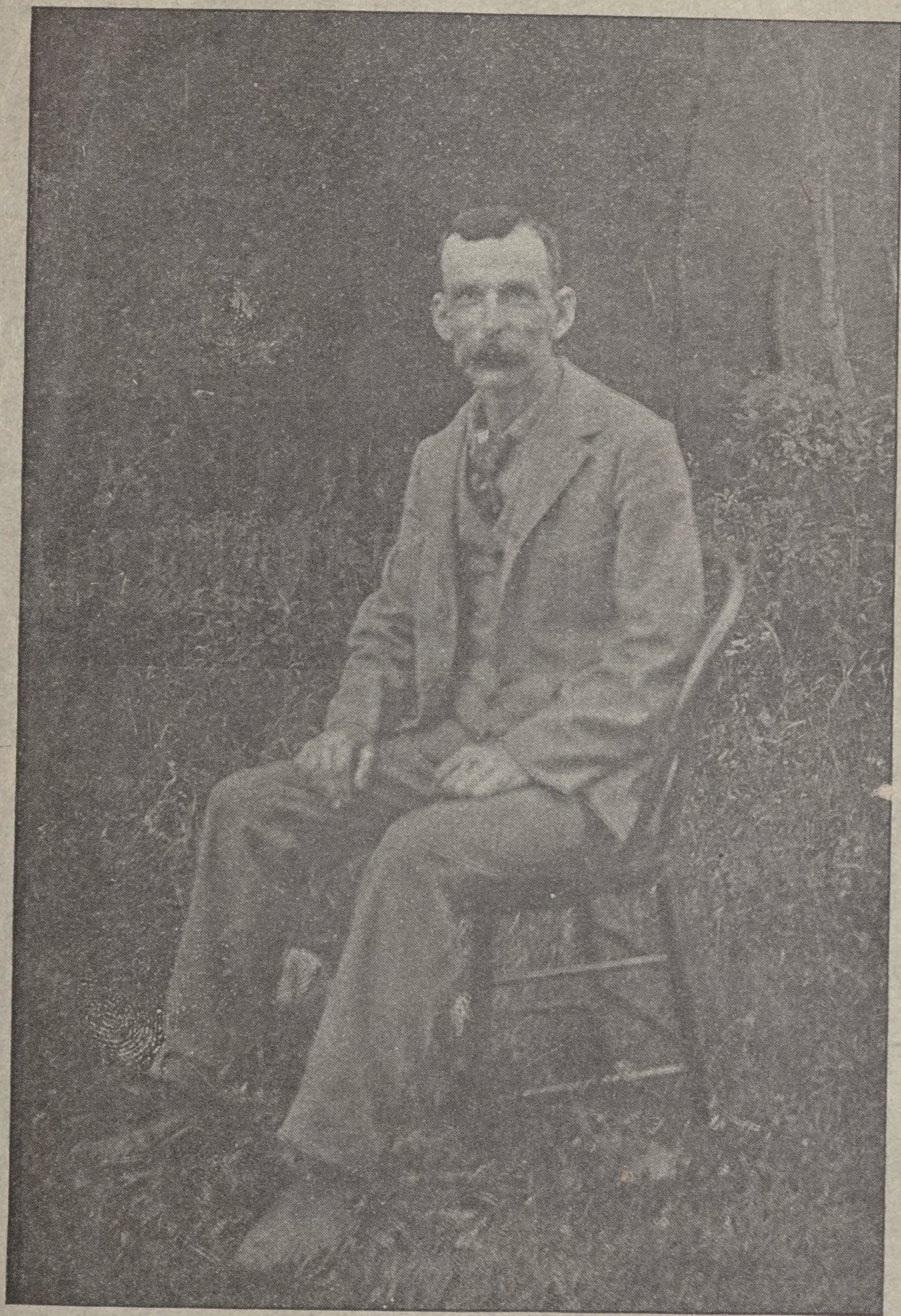
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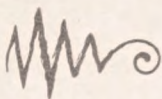
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ADVENTURES OF A TRAMP.



BY JOHN SPOLLON.

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

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ADVENTURES OF A TRAMP.

INTRODUCTION.

One morning several years ago two sixteen-year-old boys, who were obliged to cross a river on their way to work, were walking down the street leading to the ferry.

“Come on!” said one, who was a little in advance. “Hurry, Ned, or we shall miss the boat and be late.”

“Always in a rush, Tom,” drawled the other.

“I can’t accuse you of that,” retorted Tom, laughing. “But there goes the bell! The boat will be off in a minute!” and he started on a run.

His comrade followed leisurely, and arrived in time to see Tom making a daring effort to reach the boat, which was now about a dozen feet from the landing place.

The entrance to the landing place was guarded on each side by a long row of piles held together by strong timbers running crosswise. Over these timbers the boy ran with the agility of a monkey, the passengers looking on in horrified silence, and the deck hands shouting to him to “go back!”

There was a cheer from the passengers as he reached a position alongside of the boat, followed immediately by a cry of alarm as the boat lurched toward him just as he was about to step on the rail; the shock caused him to

slip ; one leg was caught between the rail and a pile, and but for the eager hands reached out to save him, his life would have been the price of his temerity.

He was taken to the hospital, where his leg was found to be so badly crushed from the knee down, as to render amputation necessary.

“ That boy can get along better on one leg than his comrade will on two,” said a cigar manufacturer who had witnessed the accident ; “ and as soon as he comes out of the hospital I mean to give him a chance.”

The gentleman he addressed observed that “ the boy was worthy of charity.”

“ I mean to offer him nothing in charity,” returned the cigar maker ; “ I shall merely give him a chance to help himself ; and if he succeeds I will be rewarded by the consciousness of my own sound judgment.”

At the age of 18 the cigar maker’s crippled apprentice was one of his best hands. When he was 19 his employer, finding him able to do a first-class journeyman’s work, gave him his time and put him on the same wage footing as the rest of the men. Allowing him those two years’ time was a great favor, but the only real one ever granted him. The boy had worked his way up from the start by his own exertions, and when he reached his majority was able to open a small shop on his own account.

During all this time he had never heard from his old friend, Ned ; but one day when passing the door of a saloon he was accosted by a young man who was lounging there :

“ Hello Tom ! you don’t know your unfortunate friends, I see.”

Tom turned, and it was with some difficulty he recognized his old school-mate in the bloated features of the lounge. When he did he extended his hand, saying :

“ I didn’t see you, Ned, or I should have been only too glad to greet you after all these years. Where have you been ? ”

“ O, I lost my job that morning for not being on hand. I haven’t done much since. How are you making out?—but I needn’t ask : your accident set you up for life.”

“ If that’s the case,” said Tom, flushing angrily, for the tone of his friend was rather insulting, “ it’s a pity you don’t meet with an accident, for you look as if you needed a little setting up.”

“ So I do,” said Ned, laughing, and adding an oath by way of flavor to his wit ; “ and as our meeting is accidental I see no reason why you shouldn’t step in here and set ’em up.”

“ I have a good reason for declining, Ned,” replied Tom : “ I never drink. But here is a dollar for the sake of old times, and you may spend it as you please. By the way, what are you driving at ? ”

Driving ! ” cried the other, bitterly, as he pocketed the money and cast a yearning, impatient look in at the bar. “ Driving ! I am *driven* — driven to drink by hard luck. If I had not met you I don’t know where I would have raised the price of a drink today. It’s tough times with me, Tom.”

“ Have you looked for work ? ”

“ Work ? O, I’ve tried everything ! ”

“ I’m afraid, Ned, that you didn’t try long enough at *one* thing. Now, if you promise me to keep steady for a year I will— ”

“O, don’t — don’t preach to me! If I was *forced* to stick to one thing I suppose I could do it as well as the next man; but having the free use of my limbs I am not obliged to, you see.”

This was enough; their ways were different — one up, the other down — and they parted to meet no more.

Tom, in the course of a short time, became the proprietor of a handsomely gilded, attractive saloon, and a very influential politician, able to control more votes than any other man in his district.

Poor Ned went from bad to worse, and became the leading spirit among a gang of tramps who travelled from place to place, subsisting upon what they could beg or steal, and putting in their nights in police stations and barns. They all liked Ned, and would do anything for him — except work. Their chief delight was to gather around him in the station house or deserted barn and listen to the queer stories he told, of which some of the best will be found in the following chapters.

There may be readers superficial enough to imagine that the author has written from his own experience. To such he would say that, *although he never was a tramp*, he has met with and observed the ways of several of these unfortunates, and that he would prefer the acquaintance of one of them to that of a politician.

HOW HE BECAME A TRAMP.

“A mixture of rum, religion and legislation made a professional tramp of me,” said the boss tramp, addressing a group of his admiring friends assembled one summer night in a deserted barn. “In the first place I lost a good job down in Woodenam by going on a spree. My employers might have given me another chance, but they didn’t; so when they paid me off I finished up my spree, and, with no money to pay my way from place to place, set out to look for work.

“The first man I asked for a night’s lodging was the Rev. Mr. Textwister, and of course his first words were: ‘He who will not work neither shall he eat.’ I told him I was not asking food, but shelter for the night.

“‘The broad canopy of heaven,’ said he, with a magniloquent sweep of the arm, ‘is good enough for such as you to sleep under.’

“As I was turning away it struck him that I might be able to furnish him with a text for his next sermon. He had been criticising Peter and misconstruing Paul for the last six months, and he wanted to give his flock something fresh in the shape of ‘a horrible example of human depravity, my dear brethren, with whom I was speaking the other day, told me — etc.’ ‘Stop a moment,’ said he. ‘I dare say that irreligion is at the bottom of your trouble. Is it not? You neglected your religious duties, I’ll warrant. Now, tell the truth: did you, or did you not, attend divine worship regularly?’

“ ‘I did not,’ said I ; ‘and what’s more I never will hereafter. If the broad canopy of heaven is good enough for me to sleep under it is certainly good enough for me to worship divine things under. Take that for your next text.’

“ ‘I went to the police station and let them take a mental photograph of me for future reference, and got put up for the night in return. The next morning it began to storm, and I took shelter under a coal shed while the rain came down in torrents for eight long hours, my only pastime munching a few crackers in which I had invested my last dime. Night found me in the same town. Thinking they would not remember my face at the station house, I applied for one more night’s lodging, and got 60 of them ; for the ‘move on’ section of the statute says, in effect, that a second application for lodging at the same place and by the same party, constitutes vagrancy, and entitles the applicant to 59 days more than he requires, all at the expense of the Woodenam taxpayers, and no allowance made for stormy weather.

“ ‘Take off your shoes before you go into that cell,’ said the turnkey, whose duties were to keep the place clean, feed the prisoners, and have them punished for insolence if they asked him a question.

“ ‘What for ?’ I asked.

“ ‘Take ’em off, or I’ll show you what for !’ he roared.

“ ‘So I entered the cell with my shoes in my hand. There was a man there already : also a smell that was enough in itself to demoralize a polecat. Our beds consisted of two planks raised about a foot from the floor, with a blanket each — to go over or under us according

to the weather, and our shoes for pillows. I asked my fellow prisoner why the guests at this hotel were compelled to remove their shoes before entering their boudoirs.

“ ‘It’s the turnkey’s rule,’ said he. ‘He’s afraid of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, I believe. If you look a little closer you’ll see that the floor is swarming with animal life. He’s afraid that you might hurt some of ’em with your shoes—see? They do say that when the cells are vacant he feeds ’em every day as reg’lar as clockwork. When the cells are occupied of course there’s no necessity for that;’—and he got up and rubbed his back against the wall;—‘the feller who was in here before me told me that the turnkey has pets among ’em, and cautioned me to be careful and not insult any of them with the blue ribbons around their necks, as they were his favorites. I haven’t seen any of ’em decorated like that, but some of ’em are certainly big enough to be chained.’

“ ‘In the bottom of the cell door there was a hole about a foot square, through which the tender-hearted turnkey fed us in a style peculiar to himself. He would come along first with tin cups, containing alleged coffee, and send them sliding in with just force enough to spill half of the contents. Then, with a lump of stale bread in his hand, he would stand off, strike the attitude of a base-ball pitcher, and let drive for the hole. If we did not have our cups out of the way, the balance of our coffee would be sent flying against the wall; and if we ventured to tell him of it he would threaten us with solitary confinement for giving him ‘cheek.’

“ ‘You may be sure that when I got out of that limbo I

was a moral and physical wreck, unfit for anything but the road; and, after all, when I got hardened into it, I found it much easier than working to walk the railroad ties, pondering on the little weaknesses of human nature and learning to profit by them.

“For instance: the first door I knocked at for food was opened by a woman in whose face I could plainly see avarice and gilt-edged pride—the latter predominating.

“‘I haven’t got a morsel of food in the house,’ said she. ‘We’ve got all we can do to live ourselves.’

“‘That’s too bad,’ said I. ‘I’ll go next door and tell them so.’

“She seized me by the collar with one hand, and with a sudden powerful wrench landed me into the middle of the room.

“‘There!’ she gasped. ‘Don’t you dare to go next door and tell ’em that! Sit right down at that table and I’ll see if I can’t hunt you up something to eat.’”

TO
MY ESTEEMED FRIEND
JOS. M. WADE,
EDITOR OF FIBRE AND FABRIC,
OCCULTISM, ETC.,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

IN THE SHOW BUSINESS.

“If ‘misery loves company’ she ought to take a trip in the steerage to London, and stay there.

“I went there myself once, before the mast, and got such rough usage aboard the ship, that I concluded to leave her as soon as she arrived — and I did.

“There were about 3,000 sailors loafing around White-chapel at the time, unable to get ships. I went down to the Tower Hill Shipping office one day to see how things looked. There I found about 200 sailors huddled together in the hole, about fourteen feet below the street level, which they call the ‘chain-locker,’ lying in wait for the chance skipper, or mate, in search of one or two hands. As soon as he would appear they’d surround him like a pack of hungry wolves; waving their ‘honorable discharges’ in the air; crushing, smothering him; and often fighting for the nearest place to his person.

“There was only ten dollars in all that hungry crowd, and that was in my pocket. There was no chance for me to get a vessel before my money was gone, and as London wasn’t the right sort of a place to be hard-up in, I resolved to do something unique in order to raise the requisite amount of wind to sail for home as a steerage passenger.

“I took a stroll down St. George’s street — formerly called Ratcliffe Highway. Down the street about half a

mile from the Sailor's Home, there was, and is yet, a large building labelled 'St. George's Chambers.'

"There's nothing in the name suggestive of poverty and misery of the worst type, but the interior of the building proves it to be only a step from the poor-house or jail; in fact it is only a sort of ante-chamber to both.

"I went in. Anybody can do that, without ringing the bell or troubling the liveried flunkies. The main door stands open day and night to tramps, pickpockets, street-hawkers, hard-up sailors and women of characteristic characters. I found a few of the honest poor there, too; for it's one of the few places where you can dine, sup and lodge for sixpence a day.

"On the left as you enter, there's a little shop partitioned off, mostly with glass, from a large brick-paved hall—the kitchen and dining room combined. Here you can buy groceries and meat. With threepence you can dine sumptuously—for a poor man. Buy a ha'penny's worth of coffee, a farthing's worth of sugar, and the same of milk. That disposes of a penny, and you have the necessary ingredients for a cup of coffee: not of the best quality, but what of it? You are not of the best quality yourself, or you wouldn't be here. Now buy a raw beef-steak about the size of your hand—one penny; and for the remaining penny enough bread to satisfy any man—in *quantity*.

"But what are you going to do with this raw material? Walk right into the hall. It's quite a large place, with tables and benches enough to accommodate 150 persons. On each side of this room there's a large, old-fashioned fireplace, five feet wide and filled with coals, with a large

boiler filled with hot water, let into the wall above. On each side of the fireplace you'll find a number of long chains fastened to the wall, and at the end of each chain a cooking utensil firmly secured. They're obliged to tie 'em up this way, because the majority of the guests wouldn't scruple to walk off with the hot coals, if they had fire-proof gloves on.

“Well, they don't charge anything for the use of the cooking gear, nor for the dishes which you'll find in a cupboard. They're all of tin—but of course you don't expect silver. You can cook your dinner, take it to a table, sit down, and—there's lots of fun in poverty if you're not too poor to enjoy it. When I entered, I found a group of men and women around each fireplace. A few fortunate ones were busy cooking, while the luckless many looked on with hungry eyes, and warmed themselves at the expense of the establishment.

“At a table farthest removed from the noisy crowd, sat a man with hollow eyes and sunken cheeks, writing as if for dear life, with a steadily increasing pile of MSS. near his right elbow, and a number of papers and periodicals near his left.

“Can't say what his business was, but I strongly suspected that he was earning just enough to live in the ‘Chambers,’ by translating the works of American authors into the English language. ‘My poor fellow,’ thinks I; ‘if international copyright ever becomes a law, you'll starve.’

“Upstairs there were bedrooms by the score, where lodgers paid twopence a night.

“I noticed a vast number of children continually run-

ning in and out of the place ; and that set me to thinking. Could'nt I help them in some way and at the same time better my own condition ? Well, I could try.

“ At one of the tables there was a family group of four. For the amusement of children who possessed more fortunate parents than his own children could boast of, the man was cutting out pasteboard toys with dexterity and a jack-knife, while his wife stuck them together with rapidity and glue. The two children, with enough experience in their unkempt, fourteen-year-old heads to make a Solon of a forty-year-old fool, looked on and learned.

“ I walked over to the table and introduced myself by asking the man how trade was. He told me it was ‘bleedin’ dull,’ and that Christmas being hover, he didn’t expect to do much for the balance of the bloomen winter.’ I called him aside.

“ Look at all these children running about here,’ said I. ‘Isn’t it a shame ? I suppose they’re nearly all orphans ?’

“ ‘ Most on ’em’s horpants,’ he replied ; ‘ but they never sawr hennythink better ; so wot’s the hodds ?’

“ ‘ Wouldn’t you like to be a father to ’em ?’ I asked. ‘ Now, I put it to you as a man that has children of his own : Wouldn’t you like to act the part of a father to all these poor orphans ?’

“ ‘ Beggared if I knows wot you’re a drivin’ at,’ said he. ‘ You must be eyether a blawstid fool yourself, or you take me for one.’

“ I put it to him in another way : ‘ Would you be willing, in consideration of five shillings a day, to branch off just the least little mite from the regular Sunday School line, and *pretend* to be a father to all these children ?’

“The light of dawning intelligence gleamed in his eyes like the aurora borealis.

“ ‘You must be in the show business,’ said he.

“ ‘Correct you are, my man. Now how many children are in this place?’

“ ‘I could find ye forty-eight.’

“ ‘Six eights are forty-eight,’ said I, brilliantly. ‘Now, couldn’t you persuade your wife to allow five other women from this house to act the part of your wives, along with her?’

“ ‘I’ve no doubt but wot she’d agree, purvidin’ it’s honly make belief.’

“ ‘Very good,’ said I. ‘Now, you talk it over with her, and the other women and children, while I go over to the Surrey side and hire a hall, and get the handbills printed. Tell them I’ll pay the women two shillings a day each and board, and the children one shilling each, and that all they’ll have to do is to sit still and be gaped at by a wondering multitude, while I lecture on them. Above all things, impress upon their minds the importance of keeping the matter to themselves, for if it gets noised abroad everything will be spoiled.’

“ ‘We know ’ow to keep our mouths shut when there’s somethink to heat in ’em,’ said Mr. Smith, for that was his name.

“Well, to cut it short, before sunset numerous handbills might have been seen floating in the air on the other side of the bridge, giving the sightseers in that quarter of London to understand that

THE GREAT MORMON FAMILY !!!

FROM UTAH TERRITORY !!

JOHN SMITH !

A LINEAL DESCENDANT OF THE

ORIGINAL AND ONLY JOSEPH,

WITH HIS 6 WIVES AND 48 CHILDREN,

will be on exhibition every evening from 7 to 9, at

NONSUCH HALL.

Admission 1 Shilling; Reserved Seats 18 Pence.

DO NOT FAIL TO SEE THE MORMON FAMILY.

“ There was a grand rush the first night, and a pretty fair attendance on the second ; but on the third day a warrant was issued for the arrest of John Smith on a charge of polygamy, and the show was busted up. But I had cleared enough money to pay my passage home, so I didn't care.

“ I found it much more comfortable to sail in the steerage than before the mast. Come to think of it, I don't mind telling you how I came to desert my ship in the first place :

“ One day on the passage to London, I was at the helm and the chief mate was leaning over the taffrail. I wondered what he was watching so intently, but I wasn't kept in ignorance very long. Presently he walked forward, pulled an iron belaying-pin from the fife-rail of the mizzenmast, walked aft to me, and said :

“ ‘ Let me call your attention to this belaying-pin. You see the pins are not fastened to the rail in this ship as they are in others, where the officers are apt to fly into a blind passion about nothing and brain somebody.’

“ ‘ Now, I have been watching the silvery wake of this noble vessel since you took the helm ; and, judging by

the shape of it, I find that you are better adapted to literature than to navigation. Now, young man, I don't mind if you make an S, or a W, or an M once in a while ; but we want to get to London *sometime*, so don't let me catch you making another O, or I'll smash your head as flat as a flounder.'"

A SINECURE.

NOTE.—The following story appeared in the Boston Sunday Globe, April-28, 1889. It was submitted as the first of a series of short stories under one title. The two stories following it were not accepted, so I altered the title and opening sentence of one of them, and offered it to the Boston Herald as a separate tale, just to satisfy myself that it was worth publishing. It was published in that paper, and will appear in this book as "The Pedler's Story."

THE AUTHOR.

"You fellows may talk about your soft snaps," said the boss tramp, as he seated himself among the inferior tramps around the station house stove ; "but I doubt if any of you ever had as easy a job as the one I lost a few years ago.

"I got it this way :

"One cold morning in March, I was standing on a street corner with my only five cents between me and financial ruin, and was asking myself whether it were better to drown my cares in a big schooner of beer, or go to a saloon where I would get only a pony but would have the run of the free lunch counter, when an elderly

gentleman with a wealthy but careworn look on him stepped up to me and said :

“ ‘ Young man, are you out of employment ? ’

“ I told him in my own pathetic way that I was an orphan son of Mr. Destiny and Mrs. Fortune, ill-used by my father and neglected by my mother until there was nothing between my feet and the cold ground but three stone bruises and a pair of elastic-side chilblains.

“ ‘ Well,’ said he, with tears in his eyes that my story or the March wind brought there, ‘ I can give you something to do indefinitely.’

“ ‘ What’s the work and what’s the wages ? ’ I asked.

“ Said he: ‘ I want you to eat three meals a day of the best food, and I’ll pay you seventy-five cents a day for doing it.’

“ I was sorely tempted to punch him in the mouth, but there was a cop on the other corner, so I remembered that he was an old man and kept my hands in my pockets.

“ ‘ I am in earnest,’ said he. ‘ Come into this saloon and I’ll convince you of it.’

“ We went in and took something all round ; I took a whiskey, the old man took a closer look at me, and the bartender took a dime—from him.

“ ‘ Now,’ said he, after giving the whiskey time to warm into life the noblest sentiments of my soul, ‘ I am going to take you into my confidence. Two weeks ago my wife lost a pet dog — died of apoplexy. Ever since then she has been harmlessly insane on one subject, namely: the firm belief that the spirit of her defunct pet returns to the house at regular intervals for his meals. So she has a table set in a back room of the basement,

and preparing his meals with her own hands — as she always did when he was in the flesh — she places them on that table and retires, locking the door behind her, for one hour. At the expiration of that time she returns to clear away the things. She will not re-enter the room until the hour is expired for fear of frightening away his manes.

“ ‘ Now, I have been acting the part of that poodle’s ghost for the last two weeks, and I am heartily sick of it; besides, my business will not allow me to hang around there stealing the food away as fast as she lays it on the table. I dare not trust the servants to do it, for they would talk, and I wish her hallucination to remain a secret. If the food remains untouched once more, I fear I will have to send her to an asylum. It nearly finished her the last time it occurred.

“ ‘ There is a private entrance from the garden to that room. I will give you the key, and instruct the gardener to admit you without asking questions. I will palm you off to her and the servants as the gardener’s assistant. Be on hand every morning at eight for breakfast, at one P. M. for dinner, and at six in the evening for supper. She is very punctual and we have no children; so you need fear no interruption. As for the mystified servants, they are never allowed to enter the sacred chamber. Don’t steal any of the spoons or she’ll know that a human being was there. Do justice to each meal. What you can’t devour carry away in your pockets, and I’ll pay you your wages once a week.’

“ When I entered that room next morning, I saw nothing in the ghost line, either human or canine; but a one-eyed

observer, if present, would have seen something astonishing in the *goblin* line when I sat down to that table. I am not going to tantalize you fellows with a description of the viands. Breakfast is too common a name for it. It was a regular *day junior*.

“ Well, I stuck to that job, contented, for one week. Then I struck for more pay.

“ ‘ See here,’ said I ; ‘ this thing of roast turkey, chicken, quail, grouse, pigeon and canvas-back duck is beginning to tell on me.’

“ ‘ What’s the trouble ? ’ he asked.

“ ‘ Why,’ said I, ‘ the first thing I know I’ll have feathers growing on me. I can feel the transformation at work within me already. No wonder the dog died. I feel that I can’t stand the strain any longer unless you double my pay.’

“ ‘ The food’s fit for an epicure ! ’ said he.

“ ‘ Epicure is only a polite name for a cultured hog,’ said I ; ‘ and if I were a hog I’d be satisfied.’

“ Then I appealed to his better nature.

“ ‘ Look at my clothing,’ said I. ‘ Some men think themselves badly used when obliged to work for their board and clothes ; but here I am, boarding myself and working for wages that don’t dress me decently. Why, I nearly faint with shame when I go into the presence of those decorated dinner sets, cut glass ware, and flowers, in this shabby rig. The incongruity of it takes the edge right off my appetite. Give me enough pay to enable me to dress up to the food I eat and I’ll stand by you as long as my stomach holds out.’

“ ‘ Well, I’ll do it,’ said he, after a long pause. ‘ But,

remember, this is final. Let me hear no more complaints.'

"Well, boys ; I kept that job just six months. Then the poor lady went to join her pet, and her husband was ungrateful enough to fire me without a reference the day after the funeral."

A NIGHT IN A BARN.

One of the "boys" scribbling with a pencil on the barn wall turned the conversation to literature.

"Yes, I tried my hand once," said the leader, "and failed dismally. I couldn't be popular because I aimed at popular errors, and you can't expect a man to thank you for slapping him in the mouth. Here is my first venture." Drawing from his coat pocket a copy of *The Boston Herald* dated April 21, 1889, he read

THE PEDLER'S STORY.

As soon as she opened the door he walked in, sat down, and told the following tale ;

"In the course of my rambles near the sea shore, I was obliged one evening, to ask a wealthy farmer for a night's lodging.

" 'Why certainly,' said he, with a promptness that surprised me. 'Glad of a chance to help a fellow creature

along. Would you mind sleeping in that barn yonder? It is snug and clean. I use it only to store hay, my cattle being housed in that other one further away from the beach.'

"I thanked him for his kindness, and, as it was already growing dark, he took a bunch of keys, unlocked the door and ushered me in.

" 'There,' said he; 'you can make a bed in the hay. I shall lock you in and be around early in the morning to let you out. Good night.'

"Making as comfortable a bed as possible in the hay near the gable end, I lay down; but, although I had been ready to drop with fatigue before I entered that barn, I lay there for two hours without closing my eyes.

"At last I sat up with my back against the wall.

"What could be the matter with me? I was never troubled with insomnia before. Why did I keep thinking, thinking, until my head throbbed so that I could hear it? Why was that man so eager to accommodate me? His willingness to shelter me for the night without asking my religious and political opinions was unnatural — inhuman, and, come to think of it, there was a ghoulis look in his eyes when he bade me good night.

"Pshaw! This was all fancy—a delusion of the brain, arising from a piece of mouldy mince-pie bestowed upon me that morning by a piously economical old lady who wanted to lay up treasure in heaven. The idea of anybody expecting to ride to heaven on a nightmare!

"Thus I raved and reasoned alternately for two hours longer, with my eyes fixed on a bright ray of moonlight which streamed through a chink in the wall above my head.

I couldn't keep my eyes off it. It looked, to my excited fancy, like a long, bright finger pointing at something, and I seemed to be waiting to see what it was.

“ Gradually, as the moon mounted higher in the heavens, that long, bright ray descended to the barn floor, until finally it rested upon — a pair of heavy top boots, with the toes turned up, sticking out from under a heap of hay at the other end of the barn.

“ A cold wave swept through me, and my hair began to bristle like the tail of an indignant cat. Who could my fellow lodger be? for surely there were feet in those boots or the toes wouldn't be turned up. Why did he not make his presence known to me during all this time? My entrance must have awakened him, unless,— I hated to finish the sentence.

“ How long that ray of moonlight seemed to dwell upon those boots. I sat there glaring at them until I could bear it no longer. If the door had been left unlocked I would have rushed out — even into the wildest kind of a storm. As matters stood I was cornered, and could easily imagine the feelings of a wild beast at bay.

“ With a sudden, desperate resolve to know the worst at once, I rushed forward and, seizing hold of one of the boots shook it savagely, at the same time yelling, ‘ Wake up here!’

“ My worst fears were realized. Nothing but the last trumpet could awaken that man.

“ How I passed the remainder of that long, terrible night is a mystery to me. When at last morning dawned and mine host opened the door, he found me standing very

close to it with my back turned carefully toward those awful boots.

“ ‘ Good morning ! ’ he cried cheerily (he could be cheerful in the ghastly presence of his victim !) ‘ Did you enjoy a good night’s rest ? ’

“ I gasped out an answer in the affirmative.

“ ‘ You don’t look as though you did,’ he remarked, eyeing me keenly. ‘ You look rather pale and worn. Did you *see* anything ? ’

“ I told him I did not — fearing that the truth would cause him to murder me, also, on the spot.

“ ‘ Hum ! This is very interesting — very important,’ said he. ‘ You *saw* nothing, and yet you look pale, haggard, terrified and — what’s this ? Why, your hair has turned gray ! Bless me ! In a single night, too. A most remarkable case. Pray sit down on this bench here and tell me how you felt during the past night ; ’—here he drew a note-book and pencil from his pocket — ‘ be sure now to describe your sensations accurately.’

“ ‘ What do you mean ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Well,— must I explain ? Perhaps it is as well : The day before yesterday a schooner was driven ashore here in the storm that was raging, and one of her crew was lost. His body was washed ashore yesterday, and I am keeping it in the barn here until his friends come after it. I was wishing last night that somebody would come along and ask me for a night’s lodging, and my prayer was answered. By way of an experiment in the interest of science, I allowed you to sleep in that barn. I am a member of the Society for Phychical Research. Now, please tell me how you felt during the night.’

“ I suggested that the story was too excruciatingly creepy for an empty stomach, so he cheerfully invited me to breakfast with him, and I told him the tale as I’ve told it to you.

“ Now, madam, you can see for yourself that my hair is a glossy black without a silver thread in it. What restored it to its original color after that awful night ?

“ One bottle of this invaluable hair-wash, madam — only one bottle, and only one dollar a bottle. Not a dye, I assure you. Can’t I sell you just one ? Let you have it for fifty cents, and I’ll warrant — stay ! Don’t unchain the dog ! I’ll go ! ”

THE FORCE OF HABIT.

“ You fellows may have noticed that I keep twirling my mustache — even after it’s shaved off. That’s the force of habit, and a mighty queer study it is.

“ One night a woman living in a little village, not 100 miles from here, left her home for the purpose of committing suicide by drowning ; partly because she was tired of living, partly because so many cases of suicide had occurred just about that time, that she thought it was the proper caper ; but mostly because she was always in hot water, and yearned with a wild yearning to make a change onto cold.

“ Of course it was like going from silly to — to — ”

“ Looney,” suggested the man who was drying a “ soldier ” on the stove to make smoking tobacco.

“ No, no ; it’s something in Greek mythology ; the one was a waterspout and t’other a whirlpool ; while steering clear of one, you’d fall into the other. I forget the name. Let it go.

“ She knew that about one mile from her house there was a bridge spanning the waters of a deep, wide stream ; and from that bridge she resolved to take the step from time to eternity. Rising quietly at about midnight, she dressed with her customary care ; washed her hands and face — forgetful of the bath she was about to take — and did her hair up neatly.

“ She then left the house, but hadn't gone twenty paces when she found that a drizzling rain was falling, and hurried back for her umbrella ; tried to find her rubbers, but failed, and it came near making her give up her project. After some hesitation she concluded to take the risk of damp feet, and set out once more on her fatal journey.

“ About half a mile from home, on the lonesome country road she saw a man coming towards her.

“ I was that man.

“ Good heavens ! What if it was a tramp and he should take it into his wicked head to *strangle* her to death for the sake of her trinkets and small change ? Trembling with terror she turned towards her home, and was about to fly when she saw a man, evidently a comrade of the other, coming from *that* direction.

“ There was nothing for it but to hide among the trees at the roadside, and wait until they met and passed on.

“ Now, the fact is that that man was her husband, and when I met him we were only a stone's throw from the place where she was concealed. She could see us, but couldn't hear the conversation that took place.

“ He asked me if I had seen a woman on the road. I told him I had, and asked him what of it.

“ ‘ She's my wife,’ said he. ‘ She left the house tonight in a very mysterious way, and I would have known nothing about it if she hadn't returned and woke me up rummaging around for something. Thinking it was a burglar, I said nothing, but got up quietly and went to my wife's room, so's to protect her. Finding her bed empty I knew it was her, but delayed so much in getting down stairs that she got quite a start ahead of me. I have no idea why she

went out at this hour of the night, but I have my suspicions.'

"He ground his teeth, and I knew right off that he was of a jealous turn of mind. Probably it was that very disposition of his that drove the woman to self-destruction.

" 'Do you think she's eloping with another man?' I asked, by way of a cautious, delicate feeler.

" 'Never mind,' said he; 'where did you meet her?'

" 'Now, keep quiet,' said I. 'She's hiding among the trees up the road, and only waiting for us to pass on before she continues her walk. If you suspect her of any crookedness I'd advise you to walk on in my direction a short distance, and then when she resumes her journey, dog her and see what comes of it.'

" 'All right,' said he. 'You come along and help me to lick the scoundrel and I'll give you five dollars.'

"I agreed. In fact I wanted a little excitement to while away the hours of the night, and I rather hoped that his suspicions would turn out to be correct.

"Well, she waited until the sound of our footsteps died out in the distance, and then went on her way. We followed, taking care to keep her in view and make no noise to alarm her.

"Presently she was brought to a halt by a large puddle of water which covered the whole width of the road, but was not more than ankle-deep in any part. Yet, rather than wet her feet, this woman on the way to drown herself climbed over the fence at the side of the road and made a detour, climbing back into the road again dry-shod and triumphant.

"At last she arrived at the fatal bridge and paused —

not in doubt or indecision, for she had not for a moment wavered in her resolution during her long walk ; but she stopped to brush a few specks of mud from her skirts, and arrange her ideas for the next world.

“ ‘ She’s waiting there to meet the villain,’ said her husband.

“ ‘ Keep back,’ said I, ‘ and wait till he appears.’

“ Stepping to the railing of the bridge, she leaned over to see how the water looked before she leaped. It was in the shadow of the bridge on that side, and looked dark, dreary, forbidding. She shuddered and went over to the other side where the light of the full moon shone upon the water—”

“ ‘ Thought it was raining,’ interrupted the man who, by this time, was smoking the “ soldier.”

“ ‘ Glad to find that you’ve been paying attention to my story, Mr. Fresh. It *was* raining at first, but in the meantime it cleared off.’

“ ‘ Mighty convenient weather,’ observed the veteran smoker. ‘ Go on. Don’t wait till it’s cloudy.’

“ The rippling water seemed to murmur a welcome ; and, without considering the fact that the current was bearing swiftly in the direction of that dark, repulsive shadow, she plunged headlong into the stream.

“ Did I jump in after her ? Well, I guess not, it was too wet. But her husband did, and I don’t know what would have become of him if I hadn’t the presence of mind to stand on the bridge and encourage him with cheering words to go in and win.

“ In a few minutes he had her safe on the bank and was asking her, rather gruffly, what she meant by this.

“ Now, from the very moment when she felt his grasp upon her shoulder, and knew that she was rescued, a big, brawny, hickory-faced Lie had been lying in ambush behind her lips, ready to pounce out upon and settle the first straightforward question that came along.

“ ‘ I must have been walking in my sleep,’ said she. ‘ O, Jawge! I never before knew that I was a somnambulist.’

“ He called me aside and asked me if I was going to be in the village next day, and when I told him I was, he handed me a five dollar bill and told me it was a plaster to keep my mouth shut.

“ The bill was soaking wet, but I told the bartender next morning that it was the perspiration of my brow.”

THE THEOSOPHICAL TRAMP.

“Theosophy is something I never studied deeply enough to hurt my head, so I know nothing about it except what I learned from the Theosophical Tramp — and that was that he himself was a fraud of the first water. He used to make a study of all the religious fads as they came out, and then work them, and the guileless fadists, for all they were worth.

“I was in his company shortly after he took up the study of Theosophy, and saw him try one of his games on one who, he believed, was a member of the Society.

“That morning he had swiped a daily paper from a doorway, and was carefully looking over the death notices when I came upon him.

“‘I find here,’ said he, ‘the obituary of a member of the Theosophical Society who has — a —’

“‘Croaked,’ says I.

“‘Young man,’ says he, with a severe look, ‘Theosophists never ‘croak’ — never die. Our beloved brother has attained the Nirvana, and as soon as I make a note of the name and address, I shall go and console the bereaved widow and see if I can’t work her for his cast-off raiment.’

“‘What are you giving us?’ I asked.

“‘You are not posted on Theosophy,’ says he. You are not able, like me, to master such words as “*Khoot*

Hoomi, Nirvana, Koko Yamma, Mahatma, etc., because they are beautiful, mystical words which prove that we are deep in the mysteries of the Kamma Lookha.'

"Of course I didn't know what he was driving at, and he gave me no further explanation, but went at once to the residence of the late Theosophist where he mounted the steps and rang the bell. He later on gave me an account of his interview with the widow.

" 'Madam,' said he, 'am I right in supposing that this was the abode of the late Theosophical brother, ere he attained the Nirvana?'

" 'My husband was a Theosophist,' said the widow, 'but I didn't believe in his peculiar doctrine, and never could understand the jargon you are using.'

" 'I beg pardon, ma'am,' said my friend; 'but I am aware that the ignorant masses have not yet reached the plane of spiritual development in which such language is understood. We Theosophists scorn such language as 'corned-beef, cabbage and spuds; pork and beans: ham and eggs; pie, etc.,' even though we hunger for the same, as I do at present. What I meant to ask was this; was your husband, who is supposed to be dead, but who has only been translated, or transmigrated to a higher sphere, a man of about my size and shape?'

" 'I don't understand you,' said the widow.

" 'And yet my language is plain,' said my friend; 'but perhaps I had better give you the details: your husband was nearly perfect, and therefore when he passed from his former body he was not obliged, as a less perfect being would be, to sojourn for a number of years in Kamma Lookha; but he, in spirit, was able to pass at once into

a perfect body. That body you now see before you in the person of a man who is in need of respectable clothing; so you will please let me have at least a part of the wardrobe of my deceased brother.'

" 'You audacious rascal!' cried the widow. 'Of all the impudent, cheeky tramps I ever saw, you are the worst! But I'll fix you! If my husband passed from one body into another he is now in the body of our dog—a nobler animal than you! Here Tiger! Catch him!'

"The Theosophical Tramp jumped for the door; but, instead of carrying off a part of a gentleman's wardrobe, he was very glad to leave behind, in a big Newfoundland dog's mouth, one of his own coat-tails."

THE DUDE TRAMP.

“I’m aware that the idea is prevalent among you fellows that if a man washes himself oftener than once a month, he’s a dude.

“Now, there’s no necessity for a man to let his hands and face become fertile enough for onions, through dread of being considered a dude; for the line between dudishness and neatness is too broadly drawn for that.

“Cleanliness is better policy than honesty, for you can tell a lie with a clean face and gain credence quicker than if you told the truth with a dirty one.

“I was acquainted with a tramp—I mean a peripatetic philosopher, who was called, by the chumps who didn’t know any better, the Dude Tramp.

“That man would wear a collar and tie when he hadn’t a shirt to fasten them on to, and nobody was the wiser. He always carried a comb, and a cake of scented soap in a small round box which had a mirror on the inside of the lid; and a razor which he stropped on his boot-leg. He carried a whisk broom down the leg of one boot, and in the leg of the other a shoe-brush. Of course he couldn’t make a walking toilet-stand of himself, and had to economize his room; so he used the shoe-brush as a hair-brush also, but he always brushed his hair first. He carried a box of blacking in one pocket and a lather brush in another; as for a towel, he’d always manage to perform his ablutions near some clothesline.

“ When his black coat began to get rusty looking he got a sheet of clean white paper and, folding it neatly, stuck it in the upper front pocket of that coat — leaving about three inches of the end exposed to public view. This answered the double purpose of giving him a business-like appearance, and making the coat look blacker, by contrast, than it really was.

“ You may ask, what was the good of all this? Well, he got his reward for it, and I’ll tell you how.

“ I was travelling with him once when we struck the hotel of an out-of-the-way western town, where they didn’t know the meaning of 4th of July yet.

“ After introducing me to the landlord as his valet, he told a long and beautifully worded story of how he was making a tour of this wild, western country with his escort and retinue, when his coach was attacked by stage robbers, escort and retinue ruthlessly murdered; their jewelry, money, horses — everything stolen, and himself and valet barely escaping with their lives. Would the landlord kindly lend him pen, ink, paper and stamps to write home for a remittance from his uncle, the arch-duke of Inspruck?

“ Believe him? Why, he looked so neat and gentlemanly, and told his story in such good shape, that I almost believed him myself, and my eyes filled with tears at his graphic description of the brutal murder of his defenceless retinue.

“ The proprietor of that hotel offered him the run of the house and the use of his wardrobe — pending the arrival of that remittance.

“ That landlord was a crank moralist; a man so severely religious that if he ever did get to heaven he brought a

cold wave in with him, and distinguished himself the first thing by finding fault with the angels for looking cheerful.

“ He had a hard time of it with his servant girls ; for if he caught one of them smiling or looking sideways at a gentleman boarder he would be sure to lecture her, and if she had spunk enough to talk back, out she'd go. In this way he managed to have a new chamber maid or table girl every few days, for the girls would speak when spoken to, and even go so far as to look pleasant when they were in a good humor. His wife, who was about twenty years younger than him, was a good-looking and lady-like woman, and always treated the girls well.

“ She seemed to take kindly to his royal nibs, my master, and, while standing behind his chair at the dinner table, I noticed that they did considerably more talking with their eyes than with their tongues ; and they weren't silent either. But I thought nothing of this at the time.

“ One day, while one of the girls was dusting the furniture and *bric-a-brac*, and the stern old moralist was peeping at her through the crack of the door, to see if he could catch her flirting with the bust of Shakespeare, his royal highness entered the room by another door and handed her a sealed note ; at the same time whispering something which the landlord couldn't hear.

“ As soon as he left the room the landlord rushed in and demanded the note from the girl. She refused indignantly.

“ ‘ Very well,’ said the old man ; ‘ then I'll give you just three days to find another place. I'll have no such disreputable characters as you in my house.’

“ ‘What is the matter, William Henry?’ asked his wife, who had heard the fuss and came in to see what it was about.

“ ‘I want her to show me the note she has just received from one of my boarders,’ said he, ‘and if she doesn’t show it and prove herself innocent, she’ll have to get out. I’m not going to have the reputation of my house injured by the like of her.’

“ ‘The note is not intended for you,’ said the girl, ‘nor for me either. I was asked to hand it to a certain person in this house, and I’m not going to tell you who ; it’s none of your business.’

“ ‘A mere subterfuge,’ said the old man, ‘but it isn’t going to hoodwink me.’

“ ‘Would you mind letting me see it, Sarah Jane?’ asked the lady sweetly.

“ ‘Certainly not, ma’am ;’ and the girl handed the note to her mistress, who took it over to the window and read it.

“ ‘Now, William Henry,’ said she, ‘you ought not to be so hasty. The note is addressed to another party, and there is no harm in it, I assure you.’ And she handed the note back to the girl, who put it in her pocket.

“ But the landlord wasn’t satisfied ; he was too much afraid of his wife to say any more ; but he resolved to watch that girl’s room all that night and fire her out in the morning if his suspicions proved to be well founded.

“ The hotel was a long rambling building, with the landlord’s apartments at one end and the servants’ rooms at the other. He prowled around the corridor all that night, but caught nothing but a heavy cold.

“ Next morning his wife was missing ; also the Prince ;

and a brief investigation disclosed the fact that all her jewelry and about \$5000 in money were gone too.

“The first I knew about it was when he came into the bar-room, and, after swallowing about a pint of whiskey, threw himself heavily into a chair.

“He hadn’t been sitting there long when the servant girl entered—the picture of triumph.

“‘Now, Mr. Smarty,’ said she, ‘would you like to see that bit of a note? I’m only too willing to show you it, now.’

“No answer. He didn’t even look up.

“‘Very well,’ she went on; ‘if you don’t want to read it I will, and in the presence of this young man, who, it seems, hasn’t followed his master yet.’

“Then she pulled out the note and read:

“DEAR BABY:

I shall contrive to hand this note to the girl while hubby is looking on. That will turn his attention to the other end of the house and give you a chance to pack up your things and slip out. I shall have the team ready for the start at eleven o’clock.

Yours ever,

PRINCE D’INSBRUCK.

P. S. Don’t forget the boodle.

“I thought it was about time for me to get out then, and I lost no time about it. I don’t know what ever became of the Dude Tramp, but as he was never seen on the road again, I conclude that he made the best of his runaway match, and as soon as a divorce was obtained got married to the woman and settled down. So you see

the advantages of being neat in personal appearance and having a good address.

“That man would lie, steal and do anything rather than work; but he always got a square meal and god-speed where a horny-fisted workingman, who waits until he is half dead before asking for a bit to eat, and then asks for it with a week's growth of beard on his face, would get three months in jail for vagrancy.

“It is a stale platitude, I know, but some of you fellows can't be reminded too often of the fact that ‘cleanliness is next to godliness’ and ‘virtue is its own reward.’”

BURIED TREASURE.

“Speaking of the Dude Tramp,” continued the Boss, “reminds me of one who was just the reverse in the matter of personal cleanliness. I never chummed with him to any alarming extent—never cared to walk with him much, for he made the air unwholesome even among the mountains or on the sea shore. When a man becomes so fond of one shirt that he wears it constantly until it becomes a sort of second skin to him, it is time for him to be ostracised from the society of people who like a change once in a while—and who *will* change if they have to tackle somebody's clothes-line.

“But one day I met him coming out of a woods with

a clean white shirt on, and otherwise neatly dressed. I hardly knew the man. But for the old familiar odor I wouldn't have recognized him.

“ ‘Hello, Bill!’ says I. ‘What’s this? Has your uncle died and left you his cast off gear?’

“ ‘None of your business,’ says he, quite saucy. ‘Who are you, anyhow? I don’t seem to know you.’

“ ‘O, come off!’ says I. ‘You needn’t put on airs because you’ve struck a change of linen. You’re not the only man on earth who can change his shirt once in a life-time. Why, I changed mine a week ago.’

“ ‘That ain’t the thing,’ says he. ‘When a man shuns me in the hour of adversity, and then fawns upon me when I am prosperous, why I know how to treat him.’

“ ‘Come down off your perch,’ says I, flaring up, ‘or I’ll pull you down and walk on you! Don’t talk to me about fawning when I am only showing my surprise, which is only natural when I see a skunk suddenly transformed into a Tom-cat—barring the smell. Don’t say ‘hour of adversity’ when you mean a life-time of inexcusable filth, and don’t call yourself prosperous till you take a bath.’

“ ‘You don’t need to get your shirt off—’ he began.

“ ‘You did,’ says I, interrupting.

“ ‘I mean you needn’t get your back up for nothing,’ he went on. ‘You know very well you never would chum with me.’

“ ‘I don’t want to chum with you now,’ says I. ‘I merely ask you where you got the clean outfit. Of course you stole ’em.’

“ ‘Of course I did not,’ says he, and after a moment’s thought—‘I don’t mind telling you. But what’s the use? You won’t believe me.’

“ ‘ Try me once,’ says I.

“ ‘ I found ’em back here in the woods,’ says he.

“ ‘ Last night I saw a man coming in here with a bundle under his arm. It was getting dark, and I was afraid to follow him ; but I hung around right here for about an hour, and saw him come out again so changed that I hardly knew him, for he had changed all his clothing. I waited till this morning and then went in and made a search. This is what I found—this suit of clothes ; and this is the suit that man had on when he went in here last night.’

“ ‘ Find anything else ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Nothing else,’ says he. ‘ By the way—that reminds me that he had a shovel with him when he went in, and he didn’t bring it out again. I couldn’t find it, though. Well, I guess I’ll be going. If you’re not coming my way I’ll see you later.’

“ When he got off a little he stopped, as if he had just remembered it, and shouted back, ‘ Say, you didn’t hear of the bank robbery in the city last night, did you ? ’

“ I didn’t answer him for I was thinking, and he went on his way.

“ I thought first of all, that he was the biggest fool alive, not to catch on to the mystery of the stranger, the shovel and the change of clothes. A bank robbery ; the burglar alarmed, takes his boodle into the woods and buries it ; changes his clothing to disguise himself, as he fears the police are on his track—why it was a clear case ; and there was that blockheaded Bill, perfectly satisfied with a suit of clothes, and never suspecting that there was a fortune hid in the vicinity. Bill always was a fool.

“ I decided to make a search of the woods ; and, while searching, all the stories I had ever read or heard of robbers, pirates and buried treasure, came crowding into my head.

“ Sure enough, in a clump of bushes I found an old rusty shovel bearing the marks of recent use. This gave the color of truth to Bill’s story ; and after a further search I found a place where the ground had been disturbed, and just above it, dangling by a string from the limb of a tree, was a stone tied up in a piece of note paper. It read :

“ ‘ Dig directly under this stone. There are millions in it.’

“ I held the stone up to the end of the string, let it drop plumb, and began to dig. I soon struck something that felt like a bag. After scraping away the dirt I took hold of it and pulled out—what do you suppose? Bill’s old shirt ! - Sure enough there were millions in it, and they were still living and raising families.

“ I don’t know why he buried it. He was full of practical jokes ; but when I thought of how he had played it on me, and how I had wasted a pint of pity on him because he looked so uncomfortable in his clean shirt, I felt as if it would be an act of charity for somebody to come along and kick me.”

THE WHITE CAPS.

“ One evening between nine and ten o'clock as I was walking along a country road, and wondering where I was going to put up for the night, my attention was called to a smell so intensely odoriferous as to be almost visible.

“ ‘Phew!’ thinks I, ‘there must be an army of skunks around somewhere.’

“ But no; a man with a pillow-slip on his head and a bundle of birch rods under his arm stepped out from behind a tree and asked me for a chew of tobacco.

“ ‘The object of our organization is to reform society,’ said he, after biting off nearly half of my plug. ‘We mean to regulate the morals of our fellowmen, and when we git this community purified we’ll pass on to another and keep the good work going.’

“ I couldn’t help but notice that, while he was talking to me, he kept scratching himself as if his principles were so large that he couldn’t contain them, and they kept oozing out at every pore—causing an intolerable itch.

“ ‘I’d advise you to give up the business,’ said I. ‘Human nature is so perverse that it is utterly impossible for you to make angels of men and women unless you can furnish them with wings so that they can soar.’

“ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘if we haven’t got the wings we’ve got the feathers and tar to stick ’em on with, and these rods’ll make ’em *sore*. This world is gettin’ so tarnal wicked that I shedn’t be a bit surprised to see the earth open and swallow it up. We propose to put our feet right down on it and crush it out. We mean, moreover, to maintain everything that’s good and just. Justice is our

best hold. It's our intention to uphold freedom of opinion and speech, and flog the internal conceit right outen the chump that says we're not right.'

"Said I: 'If you're such a saintly man as all that, and your purpose such a high and holy one, why in the name of common sense do you hide the light of your angelic countenance under a dirty white pillow slip? I should think that if you went around in broad daylight and showed them your face, all the sinners in this section of the country would pack up and move.'

" ' 'Twould never do,' said he. 'They'd only go somewhere else. What we want to do is to convert 'em, and we'll do it if we have to convert 'em into zebras with these rods. Besides, the white cap is the badge of the brotherhood, and moreoverly, we're obliged to wear 'em as a disguise; for you know very well that the corrupt press, pulpit and bar is agin us. Perhaps you'd like to know what I am here for tonight?

"I nodded, and he pointed to a house a few rods away. There was an enclosed yard in front of it, and down near the gate there was a pump.

" 'In that ere house,' said he, 'there lives a girl of fourteen who is in the habit of coming out every evening after dark. Her parents are too careless of her moral welfare to keep her in, so we are obliged to make an example of her. I'm lying in wait for her now, and when she comes out she'll get a rebuke that she'll feel for many a day. This birch rod is better than any hypocritical parson in the land.'

"But perhaps she comes out on some business,' said I.

" 'She comes out for a pail of water, every trip,' said

he; 'but that's nothing. Discipline is everything, and it must be maintained at any cost. If we allowed her to leave the house after dark for a pail of water, others would take advantage of our leniency and come out after a pail of beer probably; you see we've got to be strict or everything will go to smash.'

"I held out my hand.

" 'Put it there,' said I, in a tear-stained voice. 'Put it there! This is the happiest moment of my checkered life! My mother, whose advice I would never take, must be praying for me at this moment. You're the first man I ever met since I took to the road as a professional tramp who caused me to swell with honest pride. These tears are tears of joy. Never, until I met you, did I dream that hope could spring afresh in this ostracised chest,'—and I smote it with my disengaged hand;—'I was beyond despair; I was hardened. I thought I was pretty low down on the social ladder; but, thank heaven! there is somebody lower down than me. I am sorry to tell you, my poor fellow, that that ladder is planted firmly upon your body, and you'll be obliged to turn the whole universe completely upside down if you want to get on top!'

"Well, sir; he pulled out a whistle, blew it, and the first thing I knew I was the centre of a howling pack of two-legged wolves, with white pillow slips on their heads and birch rods in their hands. They went through me ostensibly for deadly weapons, but really to confiscate my pipe, tobacco, jack-knife and seven cents.

"Then my friend, the captain, drew a revolver and told me to take off my coat and get myself into *dish-a-billy* as soon as possible.

“ Just then something occurred that spoiled their fun and saved me from a flogging.

“ The captain got to fooling with the pistol and it went off by accident. The report nearly scared the lives out of the cowardly pack. You never saw such a stampede in all your life, and in three minutes there wasn't a white cap within a mile of the place.

“ The girl came out and got her pail of water, and I went in and struck her folks for a night's lodging, but they were afraid of tramps and refused.”

GETTING RICH.

“ An old chum of mine, named Jay Burd, said that the only way to get rapidly rich is to work your fellowmen's credulity or weakness for all it's worth ; so we put our level heads together and concluded to try the weakness racket first.

“ I had twenty dollars which I earned by the sweat of my brow, at the rate of five dollars a drop ; Burd had fifteen, and with this capital we rented a shanty in a prohibition town ; bought ten gallons of whiskey at the rate of one dollar a gallon ; watered it judiciously, and retailed it at ten cents a thimbleful.

“ Business was beginning to boom when the sheriff came down like a wolf on the fold and scooped in the whole plant with the exception of the proprietors, who took to the woods.

“ I was for giving up, but Jay wouldn't have it.

“ ‘ Bountiful Nature,’ said he, ‘ has provided a remedy for every ill flesh is heir to ; the greatest of these ills is poverty, and we are afflicted, or will be as soon as our little pile is gone. Now, Nature will not point out her great remedies ; she lets us find them for ourselves, and you can thank my shrewdness for the cure which is discovered. I have found the medicine.’

“ ‘ And what is it ? ’ I asked, thinking he must be off his base.

“ ‘ A compound of molasses, water, allspice and wormwood,’ said he. ‘ Brimstone Bitters, my boy, is the cure for our poverty. Now, let us make our plans at once. I'll be the business manager,—concoct the medicine, buy the bottles, and run the establishment under the name of Doctor Jay Burd & Co. You can do the literary work : get up the attractive labels for the bottles, write the testimonials from Omaha, Alaska, Hong Kong and Timbuctoo,—we can buy a small press cheap and print them in pamphlet form, with a treatise on Disease and its Cure copied from some other doctor's book.’

“ Well, we hunted up a sickly town ; hired a shop, and got in all the necessary ingredients. He mixed the stuff and put it up in pint bottles ; he knew more about chemistry than I did, so I let him do that part of the work while I printed the labels and pasted them on.

“ They read like this :

DR. JAY BURD'S BRIMSTONE BITTERS.

A Sure and Speedy Cure for
Swelled Head, Unrequited Love, Hams, Loss of
Cheek, Want of Push, Consumption, Corns, Baldness—
and every disease to which flesh is heir to.

It is also the best insect exterminator on earth,
and will remove Water bugs, Potato bugs, bugbears,
Bores and Dandruff.

Rats cannot live in the same house with it.

This is no wretched and worthless compound of
Molasses and Water !

Beware of vile imitations ! None genuine without
signature of proprietor. \$100 per bottle.

JAY BURD, M. D.

“ Well, we got along all right, until somehow or other our customers began dropping off until at last we hadn't one left. Now, I always said that we were hounded to ruin by the patent medicine men, some of them having gone so far in their unchristian-like envy and jealousy as to analyze our stuff ; but Jay insisted on it that it was all my fault ; that one of the testimonials I wrote did the business. He said that I tried to be funny and not only failed in it but caused both of us to fail in our business. As near as I can remember the testimonial read this way :

“ ‘ Hong Kong, China, April 1.

MESSRS. JAY BURD, M. D. & Co. :

Gents : For fifteen years I was a confirmed idiot. Used to make puns ; laugh at almanac jokes ; confide in my brother ; associate with church members ; lend money to my bosom friend ; believe everything I heard that had the least semblance of truth in it ; apologize when I trod on a stranger's corns, and imagine that women were entitled to respect.

“ But the day came when I was persuaded to try a bottle of your Bitters, and I am happy to say that my friends have all left me. My enemies no longer look upon me with joyful faces, the deceitful smile of woman haunts me no more. Doctors have abandoned as useless all thoughts of trying to collect bills from me. I have given up reading the newspapers, and devote the energies of my mind to the fabrication of original oaths. Have secluded myself from all my species as the best means to avoid bad company. I am now waiting patiently for the grave to yawn and take me in. Enclosed you will find one dollar, for which please send me one more bottle of your invaluable Bitters. I think it will finish me.

Yours surely,

AH SIN.’

“ Just about that time there was a rumor that somebody in the Black Hills had found a nugget of gold as big as a cobble-stone ”—

“ And I suppose you and your mate bought a pick and shovel and started West,” said the man who was fitting the leg of a sock over his head to keep his ears warm.

“ My mate and I invested nearly all the money we had in picks and shovels, young fellow. We bought 500 of them at reduced rates ; they cost us about \$200 ; we went out there and sold them to the fever stricken diggers at ten dollars each. We cleared about \$4,000 from that stroke of business, and might have returned to our old stamping grounds richer than any of the miners, but for the fact that we sat down to a game of poker one night and lost every cent ; we then bet our boots, and early next morning began wending our barefooted way Eastward.”

TRYING JOURNALISM.

“ I never told you how Jay Burd and I went into journalism for a brief spell. Of course we didn't know the first thing about it ; but, if it is true that if a man wants to be thoroughly original in anything he undertakes he must begin on a solid basis of total ignorance, I must say that we were well qualified, for it was our intention to be original.

“ We meant to start a weekly paper, and Jay said that we'd have to be careful and give it a name not borne by any other paper in the world ; so we thought and thought, and at last I said :

“ ‘ Let us call it “ The Weekly Journal,” and the public will subscribe out of curiosity.’ We got two tramp printers to join us in consideration of equal shares in the profits ; they said that their consciences wouldn't allow them to work on such a paper for less, and as we were in their power we agreed.

“ We mailed sample copies of our first issue to various points, and in three days we had twenty-five subscribers and 2500 contributors ; the subscriptions then ceased, but the contributions kept pouring in every day for the rest of the week, so that we made enough money out of them to keep our little press going, for what the contributors had written by the yard we sold by the pound,—realizing a nice little sum.

“ In our next issue we announced that we would charge nothing for inserting advertisements, provided that the advertisers would subscribe and pay in advance for one

year's subscription ; but as an offset to this, we stated that a charge would be made for inserting contributions, at the rate of twenty-five cents a line for smart-aleckisms in prose, and twenty-five dollars a yard for poetry. That stopped the flow of literature, though there were a few contributors, with more money and vanity than brains, who furnished us with a 'humorous column' of matter which wasn't meant to be laughed at by the writers ; but we had to enlarge our paper to double its original size to make room for the ads, and even then were obliged to refuse hundreds. We wrote our own 'foreign correspondence' and 'special cablegrams,' and hired no reporters ; nor did we need any. Jay and I made the acquaintance of every old lady of both sexes in the village, and took turn about chatting with them.

"We got news enough in this way to start a daily with a morning and evening edition, if we only had the means.

"Jay wrote the editorials, literary notes, and art criticisms. I'll give you a specimen of his style as

THE ART CRITIC :

"In consideration of having purchased five pounds of tea, I have been presented by my grocer with a beautiful picture : the masterpiece of John Smith. Mr. Smith is not as happy as usual,—I mean in the minor details of his work ; the subject is happy enough. It represents either a brother and sister or a pair of lovers : I have not made up my mind which. She is seated on a blue mossy bank under a tree, belonging to a species not found in this clime, or any other. He is looking on over her shoulder while she reads out of something that looks like a blank sheet of paper.

“ Mr. Smith has been rather unfortunate in this piece. There are many faults. We must concede, however, that he gives us plenty of foreground,—in fact his horizon is in the foreground. But his middle distance protrudes a trifle too much, and his perspective has more prominence than is required by people not near-sighted. Were it not for the jet-black crescent adorning the upper lip of the youth, we might pretend to believe that the happy couple are children ; the cottage a toy house, and the mountain a sort of overgrown mole-hill. This would account for the lack of distance and other discrepancies. We presume then that the couple are giants ; for the young lady, although seated, grazes her elbow against the roof of the cottage near by ; and the youth is three times as tall as the mountain on his right.

“ These trifling defects, however, are redeemed by the abundance of light and freshness thrown into the picture, nor can too much be said in praise of the ingenuity of the artist who can unite so harmoniously in one scene, the four seasons of the year.

“ From the yellow leaves of the tree, which is leaning with a dreamy air of repose against the bottle green sky, we infer that Autumn is at hand ; but the heavy ulster worn by the youth, sends a shiver through our frame, and we imagine we hear the fierce blast of Winter whistling through the boughs ; the next moment the perspiration breaks out on us as we catch sight of the gauzy white dress of the lady—proclaiming Midsummer. We glance downward, and in the navy blue grass at her feet there blooms a flower—resembling a daisy in shape, a rainbow in color, and a cabbage in size—which says Spring is here.

But why should a straw hat be worn with an ulster? There is a dog frisking around. He has been economically colored with the same paint which gave the leaves of the tree their autumnal tint. He is chasing a flying monster, with wings like a pair of peacock tails, the body of an alligator, the head of a bat, and the tail of a shark, This, probably, is a butterfly. We are at a loss to know the meaning of that bicycle half buried in the ground, with the spokes painted alternately red, gray, orange and purple,—the hub colored like the dog: a mangy yellow. Not wishing to be hard on any man, we would recognize this as the rising or setting sun, but the artist has made it impossible by making the weather vane on the gable end of the cottage point out the direction as due North; and, with reference to this weather vane, what does he mean by giving a N. W. wind and at the same time making every blade of grass—and even the boughs of the tree—lean to windward? Perhaps a whirlwind is intended; we make all allowances. With all his faults the artist shows one great merit—originality. He has borrowed nothing from Nature, nor any of the other old masters. Blending too many colors is what spoils the work of this otherwise brilliant artist. He should use but one—white; and we'd recommend a long-handled brush, as he is in the habit of painting so freely, to save him from splashes."

"The idea of a man wasting so much critical talent on a five-cent chromo. Called it his *shade-over*. Of course our paper failed up in a very short time. It was all his fault."

SURFACE SCIENCE.

“ Jay Burd was what you might call a chronic fool.

“ No amount of experience could take the conceit out of him, or convince him that certain notions he had in his head were wrong ones.

“ One of these notions was that he could read the human face like an open book,—bound in hide with the hair on, and printed in Family Bible type.

“ The worst of it was that when he got talking about the true inwardness of the superficial, he used words of about fourteen syllables;—vehicles too cumbersome to convey themselves, to say nothing of conveying ideas.

“ Some of the boys nicknamed him Dick Shinnery, but he wasn't a bad sort of fellow in his lucid intervals, and besides he was an old chum of mine, so I never called him that. He made me so mad one day, though, that I opened a broadside and raked him fore and aft.

“ ‘ Look here,’ said I, ‘ don't clothe your ideas in overcoats and ulsters that reach clear down to their heels, with collars that turn up and cover their whole heads, so that I can't see a speck of them. If you want to make me acquainted with them dress them in breech-clouts; they won't catch cold, and you needn't be afraid of shocking my Comstockian modesty. I got bravely over such squeamishness when I cut my wisdom teeth. Hang it! you talk to me as if I were an interviewer and you expected to see your speech in the next issue of the Badgeville Whooper.’

“ It made him wild, but he knew there was no use in trying to bluff me, so he said bitterly :

“ ‘ O, very well ; I’ll descend to the level of your comprehension.’

“ ‘ Descend to the level of common sense,’ said I ; ‘ give it to me in solid Anglo Saxon and I’ll forgive you for all past earaches.’

“ Well, he spoke plainer after that, but he hung onto his wrong ideas just the same. I was with him one day when he got both of us into trouble with his physiognomy.

“ Now I’m not what you might call a professional sweet singer ; but when spring is coming on my head gets full of rhymes that you can hear rattle when I walk. It may be the music of the *spears* that’s humming through my head, but I doubt it. At any rate when birds and waste baskets are chock full of song I feel like hunting around for similitude of sound.

“ I’ll never forget one sweet little spring poem, about three-quarters of a yard long, that I sent to a publisher. Not contented with returning it to me, he sent a note with it, telling me that I wasn’t incomprehensible enough to inspire awe and didn’t know any more about poetic feet than a pig. I saw what he was up to ; he wanted to crush my soaring spirit. I was fool enough to reply by return post. I told him that if I didn’t know anything about poetic feet I ought to—for I was a poet and wore number eleven shoes.

“ I’ll be hanged if he didn’t publish *that* under the caption of ‘ Unintentional Bon Mot.’ I had a good mind to sue him for breach of trust. Mean ? Some of them are mean enough to wear ready-made socks.

“ Now, if you fellows promise not to throw anything until I get through I’ll give you my experience with Jay Burd and his surface science in rhymes, which I wrote with a pencil on a piece of brown paper in the jail where his conceit got both of us locked up for three months. For want of a better name I called it

THE PHYSIOGNOMIST’S MISTAKE.

Dejected, wayworn, gaunt and pale,
Two tramps sit on the upper rail
Of a fence enclosing farms which fail
To hire.

Why do they travel day by day?
Their last employers—so they say—
Refused to raise their wretched pay
Up higher.

At yonder door a lady’s seen,
Whose pleasant face and gentle mien
Her bitterest foe could not, I ween,
Deny her.

Says one of the tramps : “ In many a clime
“ I’ve studied faces many a time ;
“ *That* woman has a heart, or I’m
A liar !

“ Charity’s beaming from her eye.
“ Dinner to us she *can’t* deny.
“ At any rate—no harm to try ;
Let’s try her.”

Their piteous tale of woe is o’er ;
She bids them enter, shuts the door,
Places for each a chair before
The fire ;

Spreads on the cloth a meal complete,
And then invites them both to eat
In tones as musical and sweet

As a lyre.

Then on the cloth a wistful eye
She cast, and saying with a sigh :

“ There’s only one thing more that I
Require ; ”—

She gave her little boy a can
And whispered message. Off he ran.
Our tramps the speed of that young man
Admire.

Exchanging many a wink and leer
Now sparingly they eat, for fear
They won’t have room to hold the *beer*
Entire.

The boy returns—the villainous asp !
They are in the town policeman’s grasp !
He hardly gives them time to gasp—
Well : “ Fire ! ”

O, treacherous woman ! Costly meal !
Keenly they the injustice feel
When they get three months. There’s no appeal
Up higher.”

“ Yes, boys, we got three months simply for being hungry travellers, while a well-dressed pickpocket in the next cell to us was serving a sentence of thirty days for swiping a wipe. The more a man’s toes stick out through his broken boots, the more do his sins stick out in the eyes of the world.

“ I won’t deny but what some of you fellows are pretty hard tickets ; — very hard human tickets ; — but I’m not unreasonable enough to expect to find a perfect garden of moral grace in the bosom of a man who is walking on his uppers, with the gable end worn completely out of his trousers.

“ But what’s the use in moralizing ?

“ I suppose you imagine that the dose of imprisonment cured Jay of his faith in surface science ? Why, before we were one hour in that cell he had me half talked to death on the subject of Phrenology ; and then, when I was in a weak and helpless condition, insisted on examining my head. What could I do ? He went to work with the solemnity of an owl and, after mauling me for ten or fifteen minutes, said :

“ ‘ I find that Nature’s original intention was to make a giant of you—physically and intellectually, but that, after constructing your feet, she changed her mind and built an ordinary sized man from the ankles up.’

“ That was pretty hard language to use toward a man who had shared many a handout with him. He was a great talker until it came to asking for food. Then he’d let me do the talking while he waited around the corner, and I didn’t forget to tell him so.

“ ‘ Phrenology is a great science,’ said he. ‘ Never you mind what Emerson and others say about temperament. What does a scholar, shut up in his study, know, compared with the man who walks the railroad ties with his wits eternally pressed against the grindstone of necessity ? Why, even a dog possesses the faculty of reading the human mind from external signs. Did you ever notice how a village dog can tell one of us when he sees us ?’

“ ‘ Yes,’ said I ; ‘ but it’s my opinion that in your case he’s guided by the sense of smell.’

“ ‘ I tell you,’ said he, ‘ that if a man has a head shaped like the immortal Corsican, that man is a Bonaparte, and it isn’t temperament that keeps him down, but circumstances.’

“ ‘ For instance,’ said I, ‘ you have a head like Demosthenes, but you haven’t the means to hire a hall.’

“ Then he asked me what I was going to do when our terms were out, and I told him I was going to look for a job of some kind.

“ ‘ Let’s get a job,’ said he, ‘ and stick to it long enough to earn the capital required to start us book canvassing. In the meantime I’ll give you a few pointers which, if you follow them, will lead you to success.’

“ He talked on for half an hour longer, telling me how a knowledge of the science of Phrenology would enrich a book canvasser in two months.

“ But it’s getting late, so I’ll postpone until some other night my experiences as a book canvasser. My jaws are tired talking, so I guess I’ll turn in and try to woo the drowsy what’s-a-name in spite of the animal life that pervades my virtuous bunk.”

BOOK CANVASSING.

“ ‘ The successful canvasser, like the poet who writes for posterity, is born, not made,’ said Jay Burd. “ He must be a bit of a Phrenologist and something of a Physiognomist: that is, he must possess the natural ability to read at a glance the character of a stranger. It would never do for you to ask him to sit down and let you examine his bumps. He might put a few artificial bumps on you. No; if you do not possess an intuitive knowledge of human character, based upon the two sciences I have named, you had better not undertake book-canvassing.

“ Man, from a book-canvasser’s point of view, may be studied under three distinct heads.

“ First, take the self-sufficient individual. Owing to the abnormal development of the organ of self-esteem, which is located in the back part of the upper story, he carries his head well thrown back and walks as if this world was made for his special benefit—and he thinks so.

“ The canvasser must approach this man with meek deference, and address him with a word and a bow alternately. Tell him that in order to head your subscription list with the name of a leading citizen, you call upon him first, and beg to call his attention, as a well known judge of such matters, to the Cyclopedia which you now hold before him. Hasten to add that, of course, he does not require it for his own use, possessing, as he does, all the information it contains, and a great deal more beside. But then, he may have young children; or, if not, what a

benefit it would be to his visitors; for surely the leading citizen of such a large town must be visited daily by a vast number of people. In short, the self-important man is to be won by flattery; and you can pile it on as thickly as you please.

“Next we come to the studious, absent-minded, reflective character. You will know him also by the carriage of his head.

“The organ of reflection is in the front, or forehead, and when very large the head is bowed forward. He is the opposite of the party first described; as a rule he is of a retiring disposition; so it will not do to flatter him, or hint that he leads the town, for his modesty may take alarm, and he will very likely shut the door and retreat to the kitchen under the impression that he is about to be asked to address a meeting of voters at the town hall.

“You may speak to him bluntly, and without deference to his opinion—in an argumentative manner, as if you knew better than he, what is good for him. Persuade him that by subscribing for the *Cyclopedia*, which you now show him, he will only be putting himself in the way of gaining a vast amount of much needed information.

“Next comes the man with the square, massive jaw, bull neck and broad shoulders. He is a much heavier man than either of the two I have described; but his weight is all in the flesh—a purely physical animal, and as such ought to be more easily handled by a man of intellect, so long as he confines himself to moral suasion.

“The chances are that he keeps a dog; but don't let that scare you. When the dog approaches whistle to him, pat him on the back, ask what his name is, and if he has

ever been matched against another dog. Tell his master that you have a game cock at home which you'd like to swap for one of his, which you'd be apt to see strutting around in front of the house.

“Of course there is a large portion of your Cyclopaedia devoted to athletic sports, gymnastic exercises, and other matters interesting to a sporting man. Have the part marked so that you can turn to it without hesitation ; call his attention to that alone, and if he can read, he will subscribe.

“There are many other characters which the canvasser should know how to manage.

“Women ? They are nearly all alike so far as getting them to subscribe for a book is concerned. The appearance of the canvasser is of more importance to the average female than the nature of the book he carries. Be pleasant and polite in your address, and neat in your attire, and you'll get a woman to subscribe for a book which she has no intention to read.

“I came near forgetting the dude. But he has no character to speak of.

“His surroundings ; the apartment he lives in will tell you what he is before you see him at all. Suppose you should be waiting in his room until he puts in an appearance. Everything in the room betrays the passion for gaudy outward show and indifference to inward excellence for which the dude is noted.

“If you look at the picture on the wall the first thing that attracts your eye is the frame, and that holds it ; because the frame is worth ten dollars—the picture ten cents. Look at the clock. The case is a beautiful piece of work-

manship, but the works are eternally running a race against time and always either winning or losing.

“ All his possessions are like himself—ostentatious and hollow. If your book is prettily bound and will look well on a centre-table he will subscribe for it, no matter what the contents may be. It may be a blank book for all he cares, for he never looks between the covers.

“ Now that I have posted you, my friend, you go your way with your Cyclopedia and I'll go mine with my complete Shakespeare. If you accumulate an immense fortune within a few months, don't forget that it was your old friend, Jay Burd, who gave you the hints upon which that fortune was based. But if you fail miserably, remember that I said you may not be adapted to the profession you have chosen. So long.

“ Well, I started in. My first knock was answered by a woman with a knitted brow and a stiff upper lip. There was no mistaking her physog'. You could read it running, and you'd *want* to run, too.

“ ‘ Don't want no Sancho Pedros—got enough to do to git grub ! ’ she snapped, and slammed the door in my face.

“ But I thought her an angel compared with the lady of the next house, who was polishing the stove when I called. So polite and agreeable was she that she lost no time washing her hands, but took hold of the book at once and began turning over the leaves with her grimy fingers. She admired it very much, and was so sorry that the hardness of the times left her powerless to subscribe ; and I left her house with the ‘ Rising Sun ’ stove polish attractively advertised on the fly leaves and margins of my sample copy.

“ As I left the house I met a gentleman who was going my way. He was a burly, square shouldered man, with a heavy under-jaw and a head tapering towards the top ; evidently a man of muscle.

“ ‘ Here,’ thought I, ‘ is a chance to profit by one of the valuable hints Jay gave me. ‘ Good morning,’ said I, ‘ I am canvassing for subscribers to a book which I think will interest you, sir.’

“ ‘ Ah ! What is it?’ he asked, eyeing my valise. ‘ Something religious, I suppose?’ I fancied there was a sneer in the question ; it convinced me that he was a sporting character—perhaps a pugilist ; so I said :

“ ‘ Religion be hanged ! No, sir ; you don’t catch me tramping around the country peddling tracts and Bibles to a parcel of fanatics and hypocrites. What I have here is a book more to your taste, and if you’ll just stop a moment and allow me to show—’

“ ‘ Excuse me,’ said he, hurriedly ; ‘ I must say that I cannot, as a minister of the Gospel, hold further communication with a man who expresses such sentiments as you have just uttered. Good day, sir.’

“ My faith in Jay Burd’s science was slightly shaken by this rebuff.

“ After a little reflection I decided to put another of his hints to the test, and was wondering where I could find a leading citizen, when I was roughly jostled by a man who overtook and passed me. Without making the least apology, or even deigning to glance at me he strode on, ‘ pride in his port, defiance in his eye,’ to all appearances ‘ intent on high designs.’

“ ‘ There,’ thought I, ‘ goes a man who thinks himself a prominent citizen.’

“ I watched him until he turned into a house, and a few minutes later I was ringing the door-bell, after noticing that the name on the door-plate was G. W. Loftus.

“ The door was opened by the prom. cit. in person.

“ ‘ Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Loftus ? ’

“ ‘ That’s my name,’ he replied, haughtily.

“ ‘ It is a name well and favorably known, sir,’ said I. I could see in his face the pleasure it gave him to have his own opinion of himself thus confirmed by a stranger ; so I began to produce my sample while I went on : ‘ It is a name, sir, so well known to, and respected by the people of this and the adjoining towns, that if it was once seen at the head of a list of subscribers for this book, it would induce every intelligent man to place his own name under it without further consideration.’

“ He was softened ; but he coughed, frowned and made a show of hesitation.

“ ‘ I needn’t describe to you, sir, the contents of this book,’ I went on ; ‘ you are well acquainted with them, I know ; but it will be to your honor to have it said that you were the first to introduce such a valuable work among your less educated fellow townsmen, merely by heading the list—they will all follow your example.’

“ That settled him. He was about to give me his respected name when his respected wife made her appearance and demanded my business.

“ I explained ; as for him, he seemed to shrink and shrivel in her awful presence until his clothes looked several sizes too large for him.

“ ‘ And were you going to subscribe for that book ? ’ she asked, giving him a scorching look.

“ ‘ No, no, my dear ; I was not—certainly not,’ he said.

“ ‘ I believe you were,’ said she. ‘ It would be just like your silliness.’ Turning to me she added : ‘ You go about your business.’

“ There was a sewing machine agent’s team waiting in front of the next house I tried. I was about to knock when I heard the voice of the agent, who was apparently standing inside with his hand upon the knob of the door ; so I waited for him to come out, and while waiting I couldn’t avoid hearing his parting words to the lady of the house :

“ ‘ I shall call once more for the balance due on that machine, and if it isn’t paid I shall remove the machine. Now, that settles it.’

“ The door then opened and the agent rushed out, jumped into his team, and drove off. The lady of the house came out to look after him and encountered me. If looks could kill, the jaw that’s wagging at you now would make a good model for the centre-piece of a pirate’s flag.

“ ‘ Have you been listening at this door ? ’ she asked.

“ Seeing profit in the truth, I told it :

“ ‘ I wasn’t listening intentionally, madam ; but he spoke so loudly that I couldn’t help hearing what passed. I am canvassing for this valuable Cyclopedia, and—’

“ ‘ Have you canvassed every other house on this street ? ’ she asked quickly.

“ ‘ No, ma’am ; but I mean to—especially next door on each side. However, you needn’t fear, for although I am naturally of a talkative disposition I shall take care to mention nothing of your affairs ; will you look at this book ? ’

“ She sweetened immediately.

“ ‘My! It *is* a *rull* handsome book! So prettily bound, and gilt-edged too! How much do you ask for it?’

“ ‘Only six dollars, madam; it is worth three times the sum to a lady of culture and refinement, as an ornament for the centre-table.’

“ ‘Do you sell it on the installment ple-an’

“ ‘Not by a—I mean—no ma’am; cash on delivery.’

“ ‘Very well,’ said she, with a shade of sadness in her tone. ‘You may put my name down; Mrs. A.’

“ I took down her name, and rapped at the next door on the right hand side.

“ A pleasant looking lady responded, and I did my best to get her name; telling her, as an extra inducement, that Mrs. A. had subscribed.

“ ‘Has she?’ said Mrs. B. ‘I am glad to hear that; I can borrow hers and save the expense. But if you try Mrs. C., the lady next door to her on the other side, probably she’ll buy the book; she can’t borrow it, I can answer for that. They haven’t spoken to each other for fourteen years. Mrs. A. and Mrs. C. are *mad*, and they’re going to *stay* mad.’

“ Thanking my informant I repaired to the door of Mrs. C., which was so close to that of her dumb enemy that an enterprising canvasser could knock at both at once.

“ Mrs. C. appeared.

“ ‘Good morning, ma’am; I’ve called to show you this book—a book which speaks for itself, madam; just look at the binding; it is only six dollars, and you shouldn’t be without it. Mrs. A has subscribed and—’

“ ‘Has she?’ said Mrs. C., ‘Indeed!’ and she raised

her voice, knowing that her dumb enemy wasn't deaf. 'So *she* has subscribed, has she? No wonder some people can't pay their debts!' and she slammed the door in my face. It was no sooner shut than the next door opened and Mrs. A., with murder in her eye, appeared.

" 'Come here!' said she, in a hoarse whisper. I approached cautiously, for she looked as if she might have a dagger, or a wet mop, in her hand.

" 'So! after all I've done for you, you have treacherously betrayed me to my worst enemy!'

" 'I didn't tell her about the machine agent,' said I. 'I merely—'

" 'Don't try to lie out of it! Don't talk back to me! I know better! Now you scratch my name off that list, and don't show your nose here again, or I'll scald you!' Bang went the door, and I was turning away discouraged, when I heard a tap at Mrs. B's window, and a moment later that lady appeared at the door. 'What's the tronble?' she asked eagerly.

" 'As it is a matter of some delicacy, and an important secret which accidentally came into my knowledge, I must decline to answer,' said I. 'I hope you will excuse me.' The bait took.

" 'Come in,' said she, throwing the door wide open. 'Walk right into the parlor and sit down. Now, tell me all about it.'

" 'I'd rather not.'

" 'But you must! Let me see that book. Yes, I think I'll take it. You say there's a good deal of information in it? Well, it doesn't tell the cause of that squabble between you and Mrs. A.? If you throw that in I'll take the book. Put my name down.'

“ I told her all about it, and got one subscriber. Then I hunted up a boarding house and after dinner decided to spend the rest of the day in idleness.

“ Next morning I took the first train for the next town and, on arriving, went boldly up to the nearest house.

“ The door was opened by a stout man with a smoothly shaven face, and firm, resolute features. But he had the bent head and knitted brow which, according to Jay Burd, betokened the man of deep study and reflection.

“ This, I remembered, was the sort of a party to whom I might speak bluntly.

“ ‘Here!’ said I. ‘ Here is a book which you are very much in need of. A man like you, always in pursuit of knowledge, shouldn’t be without a Cyclopedia a single day. Take hold of it! It won’t bite you!’

“ The first part of his reply was couched in the language of blanks and dashes; the printable part of it was a warning to vanish if I didn’t want a ‘slug in the jaw.’ He also wanted to know if it wasn’t enough for a man to be suffering with a *bile* on the back of his neck without being pestered by a cussed cheeky canvasser? That settled my faith in surface science. That man was a pugilist, but a boil on the back of his neck gave him the appearance of a book-worm.

“ ‘Madam,’ said I to the lady of the next house, ‘ allow me to show you this excellent Cyclo—’

“ ‘You clear out of this!’

—“ ‘pedia. It is a book no lady of ref—’

“ ‘You git! Do you hear?’

—“ ‘inement and culture should be without. It is elegantly bound in green and gold and—’

“ ‘Are you going to git, or are you not?’

“ ‘contains numerous handsome steel engravings—’

“ ‘Here Jack ! Jack ! Jack ! s-s-sketch ’im !’

“ The dog was a cur, or else he didn’t possess artistic talent enough to sketch me, but his voice was louder than mine, so I was fairly barked down and out.

“ The proprietor of the next house was a man with a nose like an inverted point of interrogation. He heard me out, and then asked my name ; then he asked me where I came from,—and where I came from before I came from the place I came from before.

“ I ran away from him ; I was sick of the business, and resolved to walk back to the town where my only subscriber lived ; sell her my sample copy, and go out of the business.

“ On the road I met Jay Burd. He looked sad. I asked him what he was doing out of his territory. He told me he had sold his sample copy of Shakespeare and had started in search of me.

“ ‘Let us give up the business,’ he said, ‘and take to the road again. When I selected the works of William Shakespeare I thought I was saving myself yards upon yards of chin music ; I imagined that I had a book which spoke for itself ; but I soon found that I was obliged to tell who was the author of it, and to know all about Lord Bacon, Ignatius Donnelly, the cryptograph, and ciphers. I was expected to deliver a lecture at every house, and then if my opinion didn’t coincide with that of the party I lectured, I couldn’t get his name. Let us give it up and walk the railroad ties again.’ ”

KILLED BY KINDNESS.

“ It is queer how retribution will overtake a man when he least expects it: just as he feels convinced that fortune is heading his way under full sail with a strong breeze on the quarter.

“ We were bound with a cargo of coals from a North of England port to Kurrachee, India, *via* the Cape of Good Hope.

“ During the whole outward bound trip we had short and bad rations. The steward, who cooked for both cabin and forecastle, aggravated us, and found pleasure in it, no doubt, by describing what a feast they were having in the cabin. We knew what we were having: ‘ salt horse ’ and hard-tack, varied by hard-tack and salt pig, from the day we hove up the anchor until we dropped it in the Indus river, after a trip of 116 days.

“ The cook himself showed signs of anger as he told us how the skipper had brought to sea a lot of fresh provisions, for his own use, which spoiled on his hands and had to be thrown overboard.

“ ‘ Half of that fresh meat and wegetables might ’a’ been given to the fokesel at the start,’ said he. ‘ He might ’a’ known it wouldn’t keep. I tell ye what it is: such miserly hextravagance is onlucky and can’t go without its proper punishment. He’ll suffer for it afore this voyage is over, and p’r’aps we’ll ’ave to suffer with ’im.’

“ But it did not turn out quite as badly as the cook had predicted.

“ After discharging our cargo in Kurrachee, we shipped another of rice and grain.

“ Just before we weighed anchor, the skipper came aboard with the leanest, hungriest-looking sheep we had ever seen. He had bought her at a great bargain, we felt sure, from a native who must have been secretly glad to get rid of her, for she looked as if famine had damaged her beyond repair.

“ Forward in the bows, between decks, there was a triangular locker with a door just large enough to admit the sheep, and there the skipper proposed to pen the beast until she was fat enough to make mutton for himself and officers.

“ ‘ He reckons to ’ave quite a big blow-out on yon sheep arter we’re a month or so out ; just when fresh meat will taste good,’ said the cook. ‘ Not a man Jack afore the mast will get so much as a bloomin’ bone to pick, ye can take yer after davitt on that ! He’s goin’ to fatten the poor ghost on leavin’s from the cabin—stuff that’s too good for able seamen to eat, ye know ; but just the thing for a measly Hindoo sheep ! Poor Britons ye are if ye don’t complain to one of the Plimsoll’s agents the first port we come to ! ’

“ The prentice boy, Billy, did not take such an envious view of the matter, for he made a great pet of the sheep from the day she came aboard.

“ ‘ Ned,’ said he, after we had been out a week, ‘ that poor sheep don’t seem to get no fatter.’

“ ‘ What’s that to you ? ’ asked the cook, who overheard him. ‘ For my part, I’d be glad to see her go into a gallopin’ consumption ! ’

“ ‘ That cook is the biggest crank afloat,’ said the boy when the cook went into his galley. ‘ Always growlin’ and tryin’ to get others to growl. But I do pity that poor sheep and I’m goin’ to give her a good feed, as that cook should have done at first, only he’s too mean. I’ll do it, if I have to steal the grub ;’ and he went below, ripping a bag with his sheath-knife, and came up with his roomy sou’wester full of rice. It was during the mid-watch and a dark night, so he was not noticed. The hungry sheep ate the hat-full of raw rice, and then it struck Billy that the feeding was rather dry ; so he stole a pail of fresh water from the scuttle-butt. The thirsty sheep drank nearly all of it, and then lay down in her pen with a feeling of fullness.

Next morning the cook’s head appeared at the cabin door.

“ ‘ Captain,’ said he, ‘ I think that ere sheep is plenty fat enough for ye now.’

“ ‘ What are you talking about, man ?’ growled the skipper.

“ ‘ You heerd what I said,’ returned the cook. ‘ If ye don’t believe it, come for’ard and see.’

The unfortunate sheep lay with her head partly outside the door of her pen with her eyes bulging almost out of her head.

“ ‘ Why, blank dash it ! The sheep’s dead !’ roared the skipper, and he collared the cook.

“ ‘ Hands off, cap’en ; hands off !’ threatened the cook. ‘ I’ll have ye afore a magistrate as soon as ye land ! I know nowt about yer blasted sheep, so be careful !’

‘ Pull her out here !’ gasped the captain, half-choked with rage.

“ ‘I can’t,’ said the cook.

“ ‘I tell ye she’s too fat to come out that door. We’ll ’ave to bust the bleedin’ locker open, or else take her out by instalments.’

“ ‘Lay hold with me. Now, together!’ They pulled, but it was useless.

“ Then the captain danced a wild, wayward hornpipe, full of original if not artistic steps.

“ ‘She’s been poisoned!’ he yelled. ‘Nothing but poison would swell a beast up like that! If I knew—if I only suspected—who did it, I’d keel-haul him! I’d—I’d tow him astarn for a week, and then I’d hang the scoundrel up by the neck from the yard-arm to dry! Smash that locker open one of ye, or I’ll smash somebody!’

“ The locker was broken open while the skipper poured out a stream of original and well-selected curses on the unknown despoiler of his feast; and the victim of an ignorant boy’s kindness was dragged out on deck—a sight to behold! There was really more rice than sheep; but, as the rice was invisible, and the skipper sure of the poison theory, the carcass was thrown over the side, and he never learned the real cause of the sheep’s death until we were within a few days’ sail of home and all hands in a good humor.

“ We had just weathered a heavy gale and were hoisting the fore-topsail again. Billy, who by virtue of a clear, musical voice and a knack at rhyming, was our ‘shanty’-singer, began:

“ ‘On board a Black-Baller I first served my time.’
(Chorus by all hands.) ‘To, ho, blow the man down!’

“ ‘On board a Black-Baller I wasted my prime.’ B.T.E.

“ ‘Gimme some time to blow the man down !’

“ Just then the parral of the yard got jammed, calling for the ‘ long and strong pull shanty’, which was in longer meter.

“ As I recall the scene, there comes to me up here among the hills, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, a strong breeze from old Ocean, bearing with it the rhythmic wash of waves against a ship’s side, the flapping of canvas, the creaking of halliard-blocks, and high above all the loud, sweet voice of the boy as he gave us the same old tune to which thousands of seamen have hauled upon ropes, but to which he had set a lot of new rhymes of his own composition :

“ Billy was a bully boy, if ’twarnt for his blindness.”

“ Away, haul away, haul away, *do*.”

“ Billy was a bully boy, *he killed the sheep with kindness*.”

“ Away, haul away, haul away, *do !*”

“ The captain, who, unknown to Billy, was standing close behind him, started and cocked his ear at this ; and there was a half smothered laugh among us as we leaned forward with the rope in our hands waiting for the next line. It came :

“ Billy fed the hungry sheep on rice and lots of water.”

“ Away, haul away, haul away, *do !*”

“ He fattened up the skinny sheep till she was fit for slaughter.”

“ Away—Ow !”

“ Billy had received a kick from the rear that raised him a foot and cut short the chorus.

“ ‘So it was *you* killed my sheep, was it, you young imp ?’ shouted the captain. ‘ Lucky for you, my lad, that

I didn't find it out in time ! Didn't you know any better ? Did you ever see your mother soaking rice over night and notice how it was swelled in the morning ? '

" 'Naw, I didn't, then ; smart as you are,' sauced Billy. ' I want you to know that my mother is an English woman, and no bloody Chinyman ! ' and he sprang into the rigging in time to escape the rope's end, which the captain soon dropped and walked aft, trying to conceal a smile after telling us to ' hoist away that topsail, instead of standing there grinning. ' "

THE SAILOR'S YARN.

(Reprinted from Wade's Fibre and Fabric.)

" ' There's no credit in being a philosopher on three meals a day and a roof overhead,' observed the Boss. " It makes me tired to hear a man boasting about his *contentment* after dinner. The time to work in your philosophy, if you have any, is when you are walking on your uppers with the slack of your stomach chafing against your backbone ; that's the time to be contented and happy, and at peace with all mankind—especially the men who have more than their share of this world's goods.

" If there's anything makes me more weary than the well-fed philosopher it is the poor man who wastes pity on himself. Self-pity never fails to make a man more miserable than there's any need for, and that's all the good he

gets out of it. Now, instead of pitying himself when he is in a bad fix, a true philosopher will pity the people who are worse off, for there's no condition so bad but what it can be worse—unless it is made worse by self-sympathy—and then it gets down to rock-bottom and can go no lower. Pity others always and you will feel none of your own misery. Cast your bread upon the water and look cheerful when you ask for a fresh handout and you'll get it nine times out of ten."

" 'That reminds me,' said a sailor who was present, 'that I heerd of that ere passage in the Scriptor where it says, 'cast your bread on the water and after many days it will return.' I didn't believe it. Leastways I was bound to test the matter, being a young kid at the time ; so one day when the wind was fair and moderate I chucked a hard-tack over the side and watched it as it dropped astarn

" 'Thinks I, 'it will be a good many days afore you return,' and just then the skipper collared me.

" 'Rippety blank blank !' says he, ' you blankety blank ! what d'ye mean by wastin' good grub like that ? Don't ye know it's a sin, blank dash yer eyes ?'

" I told him why I did it.

" 'Well,' says he, castin' his weather eye toward a cloud about the size and shape of a ham away to wind'ard, ' p'r'aps that ere biscuit will return to you in a way you won't like afore many days. There's no tellin'.'

" I didn't see nothin' to be scared of in a little cloud like that, but fust thing we knew the old man was shootin' off his mouth like a gatlin gun :

" ' Let fly all yer to'gallant sheets ! Clew up ! Hands

by the torpsel halyerds ! Lower away ! Man clewlines and buntlines ! Jump ! Jib downhaul forerd there ! Quick's yer play ! Dash blank it ! Here she comes !'

“ And come she did, sure enough. There wasn't no need to furl them to'gallant sails. The squall jest ripped 'em outen the boltropes and took 'em along to looard as if she were in the habit of blowin' in them kind of handkerchers ; and afore we had time to luff up, or take in another stitch, we were lying on our beam ends—or so close to it the wasn't no fun.

“ Well, it blowed over after a while and she righted again, but the awful strain made her spring a leak—being an old ship and pretty rotten. Pumps were no use. We had to take to the boats, and she went down.

“ It was our luck to be in the track of other ships, or we would have starved to death afore we were picked up—which picked up we were in the course of a week—but I tell you my crew was ready for corn when I was picked. And that ere hardtack which I'd cast upon the water ? Well, it did return to me the very fust time I went to sleep hungry ; but when I reached for it—it wasn't there, but as soon as I'd doze off again it would come dancin' along on the waves toward me—and fool me again when I'd make a grab.

“ I tell you, boys, that was a lesson in economy to me. It made me more careful with my money. Every time I get ashore now I always patronize the saloons where you git the biggest schooners.”

THE TOWN JAIL.

There were four of them ; three mill men and a professional tramp. There was the Loom-fixer who knew more than the Boss ; the Weaver who knew more than the Fixer ; the Filling-carrier who knew more than the pair of them ; and the Professor aforesaid, who knew it all.

Night fell on them in a small New Hampshire town, and hit them so hard that they felt it was useless to travel further until sleep had restored their energies. One would suppose that the combined knowledge of these four men would have moved the Universe, but it did not even move them on, for the Professor accosted a native with “ Say, cully, where’s de put-up in dis ville ? ”

The man stared.

“ We are travellers,” explained the Fixer in classic English, “ and wish to know if there is a place in this town where men in our condition can obtain a night’s lodging free of expense ? ”

“ We’ve got a new jail,” said the native, with some pride in the statement, “ where we put tram—velers also. But you’d have to see the Overseer of the Poor.”

“ Would you mind showing us this jail ? ” asked the Weaver.

“ Why, there it is,” said the native, pointing to a small building erected on a ledge near the side of the road.

“ Rippety juba ju ! ” cried the Professor. “ D’ye mean to call dat henroost a jail ! ”

“ Well, we’ve had no prisoners in it yet ; but it is the place where we put up trampvelers,” said the man who was fast losing his respect for the party.

“ Less move on, boys,” said the Professor. “ I’d rather bunk in de woods den sleep in dat coop.”

“ But we’ll have to get shelter some place tonight,” said the Fixer, after they had walked a short distance. “ It is too cold to sleep out.”

“ I’m posted,” said the Professor. “ ’Bout a mile down de road dere’s a summer cottage. De bloated aristocrats wot loaf in it durin’ de summer is gone to dere palatial mansions in de city fer to hibernate fer de winter, see? And dey leaves deir furnicher in de crib—a stove and beds and such ; dat’s all we need.’

Arriving at the place referred to, our travelers soon gained entrance through a window, and after kindling a fire sat down to enjoy it. They were just thinking of exploring the upper rooms for beds, when the door opened and the Police Force of the town they had just left, filed into the room. They were four to his one, but he represented the long, strong arm of Law, and when he ordered them to march ahead of him back to town they obeyed, and soon found themselves again in front of the despised town jail.

“ In you go ! ” said the officer throwing open the door.

“ D’ye mean to tell me dat inside of dis collar-box dere’s a bed big enough to hold four men ? ” asked the Professor.

“ I mean to tell you nothing,” replied the Force, “ except to walk in there ; and if you don’t I’ll help you.”

That settled it, and the door was soon locked on them.

“ He’s a go ! ” said the Filling-carrier dolefully.

“ It’s more like a stay,” said the Weaver.

“ We’ll stay till morning anyhow,” said the Fixer.

“ Then I suppose we’ll go to a bigger jail in the nearest city to await trial.”

“ It’s a t’ree years job for youse mugs,” said the Professor, striking a match and lighting a piece of tallow candle which he found in one of his capacious pockets.

“ What do you mean by us mugs ? ” asked the Fixer, indignantly. “ You talk as if you were the judge, instead of one of us.”

“ Wot I mean is dis, cully : Breakin’ an’ enterin’ is a serious offence, and if youse mugs mean to stay here all night and take yer medicine in de mornin’, ye can do it. But you musn’t count me in, see ? ”

“ I’d like to know how we are going to count you out,” said the Fixer.

“ If you’re going to sit dere all night gruntin’ over yer past life, I suppose I’ll be in it wid ye ; if yer willin’ to help me walk off wid dis crib, we’ll all be free in a few hours ; ” and producing a large jack-knife he fell to work on one of the floor boards, saying, ‘ All dere is to it is to whittle a hole big enough to get our hands down ; den we rips up de floor, and wid our feet on de bare ground if we can’t shoulder dis box and walk out of town wid it, why we deserve to do time for warmin’ our shins in a summer cottage.’ ”

How it was done the town people could not clearly make out ; especially those who had kicked at town meeting against the appropriation of enough money to build a substantial jail ; but there was the new jail lying on its side in the road, and the tramps were gone.

THE WEAVER'S STORY.

(Reprinted from the Worcester Spy.)

Among the tramps sitting under the shelter of the shed which the villagers dignified by the name of "depot," were three or four of the class known as "bum weavers."

"Let's see," said one of them; "this is a one-factory town, I believe."

"That's what," replied a man who was trying to sew a button on his shirt-cuff with one hand. "Six-set mill—monthly pay—twenty days kep back at the start—make about thirty-five dollars a month, if yer warps are all right, and the boss's sister and wife and cousin don't work there and git all the good warps, and,"—here the speaker laid particular stress upon a special enormity—"not a durn drop of anythink to drink—except Jamaica ginger—within a raju's of five miles from the cussid hole."

"Why, what do they run the mill with?" inquired the first speaker.

"Water," quickly returned the other; "but you can't catch me, for that's all water's fit for."

"I s'pose there's no use in trying to strike a job here, then?"

"Not if you're a single man, young fellow," said a prematurely old man, who looked as if he had been run through a fulling mill with nothing to back him up.

"The mill-owner owns all the tumble-down tenements in the town, and he wants to keep them tenanted. I'd advise you to go and ask one of the villagers if there is a house vacant. If there is, and you have a family, you can

safely strike the owner for a job. He'll make room for you. As for me, I'm going to push right along the railroad ties. I hate the sight of these one-horse towns."

"Must have had some bitter experience, old man!" observed one of the tramps, nudging his neighbor and winking at the others.

"The history of my factory life is easily boiled down," said the old man; and while we are waiting for the rain to let up I might as well amuse you with it."

"I married a weaver, and as we worked together, we continued to live in the boarding house, and were doing fairly well. Everything went along smoothly, but not wisely; for we spent all our earnings on fine clothing and holidays; until the first child came to brighten our life. We then decided to try housekeeping, little dreaming at the time how housekeeping would try us. We furnished a tenement on the instalment plan, paying,—or promising to pay,—double for everything.

"Finding that I couldn't go it alone, my wife took the child from her breast, substituted a nursing bottle, and hiring a cheap old woman—who would have been dear at any price—to keep house and look after the baby, went weaving again to help me out.

"Whether the old woman was in league with the butcher and grocer, or merely careless, I don't know; but our bills became so large that my wife's work was more of a loss than a gain to us. Then the child died of the change of diet. Another was soon born. Wife swore she would do no more work but housework, and I couldn't blame her. Doctor and funeral bill for our child; doctor and nurse bill for another; instalment to pay on this, and

cash down on that—all combined to make a down grade of the road to recklessness.

“Creditors kept pressing, until I chucked up my job and skipped to another town—a one-horse town like this. I had just money enough to move. After working a few days I went to the only grocer in the place and asked tick for some provisions. He asked me where I came from last. I told him it was none of his business.

“‘But it is my business to secure myself,’ said he, ‘before I trust a stranger. It is none of my business whether you owe money or not in the last town you came from; but I must look out for my own interest, see?’

“I was walking out, when he called me back, and in a friendly, confidential tone, told me he knew from experience that I was in debt; that I couldn’t be different from all the other factory people in town; that my creditors would be after me before long; that if he trusted me he would lose, not by my dishonesty, but by their rapacity—for when they attached my wages where would he get his pay? In short, ‘secure yourself,’ said he. ‘Sign your wages over to me, as all the others have done. You can draw your own wages, same as the others, and nobody will be the wiser. Why, there is only one man in this town whose pay is *not* assigned to me. I shall not tell you who that man is, but ask any one of them and he will tell you that *he* is the man—Ha! ha!—’ and he clapped me on the back, handed me a cigar, called me into the back room, handed me a bottle and glass, and ten minutes afterwards handed me a pen. I became his slave. Thenceforward I was working, not for my employer, not for myself or my family, but for my grocer, who charged me whatever he pleased for the meanest kind of provisions.

“ He managed to make his bill cover my entire pay every month, and for a few months I paid it ; but being in need of a little cash one month I left a balance to be paid later, and he looked black. Next month the balance was doubled, and he threatened to draw my pay himself if I continued to act in that way—‘ a thing he hated to do, but he had to look out for himself, did I see ? ’

“ I saw, and promised to make all right next pay-day. Next month I took *all* my pay, got a job in another little town, moved there, and gave an assignment of my wages to the bland and convivial grocer who did business there ; then had the cheek to write to the other grocer, telling him I had *secured myself*, and thanking him for learning me that little trick. To make matters all right with my conscience I began to drink. It takes a constant down-pour of whiskey to keep a man’s conscience quiet. So I poured.

“ Just about that time my wife began to sour on me ; wanted to know if it wasn’t bad enough to be half rogue and half fool without adding the accomplishment of whiskey-guzzling ?—and such-like aggravating questions. Her upbraidings and reproaches drove me to drink, and then she left me. Women are at the bottom of all the troubles in the world, I do believe. She is and has been earning her own living ever since, and I think she is doing fairly well, for the boy is now old enough to help her.”

“ Hurrah ! ” sang the man who had by this time sewed the button on his cuff.

“ Hurrah for the life of a tramp ;
Cadging and low it may be ;
But your scorn I brave
For the worker’s a slave,
And the vagrant is free, free, free ;
The life of a tramp for me.”

END.





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